United Nations S/PV.4352

# Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

*Provisional*

## 4352nd meeting

Monday, 30 July 2001, 6.15 p.m.
New York

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *President:* | Mr. Wang Yingfan | (China) |
| *Members:* | Bangladesh | Mr. Chowdhury |
| | Colombia | Mr. Valdivieso |
| | France | Mr. Doutriaux |
| | Ireland | Mr. Cooney |
| | Jamaica | Miss Durrant |
| | Mali | Mr. Touré |
| | Mauritius | Mr. Koonjul |
| | Norway | Mr. Gram-Johannessen |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Granovsky |
| | Singapore | Mr. Mahbubani |
| | Tunisia | Mr. Ayari |
| | Ukraine | Mr. Shevchenko |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Harrison |
| | United States of America | Mr. Cunningham |

## Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

Letter dated 21 May 2001 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/511).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

01-47269 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 6.15 p.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in Afghanistan**

**Letter dated 21 May 2001 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council** (S/2001/511)

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2001/511, containing a letter dated 21 May 2001 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting the report of the Committee of Experts appointed pursuant to Security Council 1333 (2000) regarding the monitoring of the arms embargo against the Taliban and the closure of the terrorist training camps in the Taliban-held areas of Afghanistan. Members of the Security Council also have before them document S/2001/741, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Colombia.

I should like to point to an error in the draft resolution. In operative paragraph 5, the word "Teams" should read "Team". The text will be amended following the adoption of the draft resolution.

It is my understanding that the Security Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution (S/2001/741) before it. If I hear no objection, I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

*A vote was taken by show of hands.*

*In favour:*

Bangladesh, China, Colombia, France, Ireland, Jamaica, Mali, Mauritius, Norway, Russian Federation, Singapore, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

**The President** *(spoke in Chinese):* There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1363 (2001).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

*The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.*

United Nations S/PV.4353

# Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

*Provisional*

**4353**rd meeting

Tuesday, 31 July 2001, 11.05 a.m.

New York

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *President:* | Mr. Wang Yingfan | (China) |
| *Members:* | Bangladesh | Mr. Chowdhury |
| | Colombia | Mr. Salazar |
| | France | Mr. Doutriaux |
| | Ireland | Mr. Kavanagh |
| | Jamaica | Miss Durrant |
| | Mali | Mr. Issouf Oumar Maiga |
| | Mauritius | Mr. Koonjul |
| | Norway | Mr. Kolby |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Granovsky |
| | Singapore | Mr. Yap |
| | Tunisia | Mr. Ayari |
| | Ukraine | Mr. Kulyk |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Harrison |
| | United States of America | Mr. Hume |

## Agenda

The situation in Georgia

Report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia (S/2001/713).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

01-47443 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m..*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in Georgia**

**Report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia** (S/2001/713)

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, document S/2001/713. Members of the Council also have before them document S/2001/747, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Security Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. If I hear no objection, I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

*A vote was taken by show of hands.*

In favour:

Bangladesh, China, Colombia, France, Ireland, Jamaica, Mali, Mauritius, Norway, Russian Federation, Singapore, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

**The President** *(spoke in Chinese):* There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1364 (2001).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matter.

*The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.*

United Nations S/PV.4354

# Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

*Provisional*

**4354**th meeting

Tuesday, 31 July 2001, 11.10 a.m.

New York

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *President:* | Mr. Wang Yingfan | (China) |
| *Members:* | Bangladesh | Mr. Chowdhury |
| | Colombia | Mr. Salazar |
| | France | Mr. Doutriaux |
| | Ireland | Mr. Kavanagh |
| | Jamaica | Miss Durrant |
| | Mali | Mr. Issouf Oumar Maiga |
| | Mauritius | Mr. Koonjul |
| | Norway | Mr. Kolby |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Granovsky |
| | Singapore | Mr. Yap |
| | Tunisia | Mr. Ayari |
| | Ukraine | Mr. Kulyk |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Harrison |
| | United States of America | Mr. Hume |

## Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (S/2001/714).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

01-47449 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in the Middle East**

**Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon** (S/2001/714)

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, document S/2001/714. Members of the Council also have before them document S/2001/748, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to a letter dated 26 July 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/2001/734.

It is my understanding that the Security Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. If I hear no objection, I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

*A vote was taken by show of hands.*

*In favour*:

Bangladesh, China, Colombia, France, Ireland, Jamaica, Mali, Mauritius, Norway, Russian Federation, Singapore, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

**The President** *(spoke in Chinese)*: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1365 (2001).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matter.

This has probably been the last meeting of the month. I should like to thank all the members of the Council for their support, cooperation and friendly spirit. I take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General and the members of the Secretariat for their valuable help and assistance.

*The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.*

United Nations S/PV.4355

# Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

*Provisional*

**4355**th meeting

Thursday, 2 August 2001, 10 a.m.

New York

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *President:* | Mr. Fernández de Soto | (Colombia) |
| *Members:* | Bangladesh | Mr. Chowdhury |
| | China | Mr. Wang Yingfan |
| | France | Mr. Doutriaux |
| | Ireland | Mr. Cooney |
| | Jamaica | Miss Durrant |
| | Mali | Mr. Kassé |
| | Mauritius | Mr. Koonjul |
| | Norway | Mr. Strømmen |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Gatilov |
| | Singapore | Ms. Lee |
| | Tunisia | Mr. Chaouachi |
| | Ukraine | Mr. Kuchinsky |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Eldon |
| | United States of America | Mr. Cunningham |

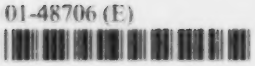
## Agenda

Small arms

Letter dated 25 July 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/732).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

01-48706 (E)



*The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m.*

**Expression of thanks to the retiring President**

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of August I should like to take the opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Wang Yingfan, Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of July 2001. I am sure that I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Wang for the great diplomatic skills with which he conducted the Council's business last month.

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**Small arms**

**Letter dated 25 July 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council** (S/2001/732)

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Egypt, Ghana, India, Japan, Mexico, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, South Africa, the Sudan and Venezuela, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. Listre (Argentina), Ms. Moules (Australia), Mr. Ling (Belarus), Mr. De Ruyt (Belgium), Mr. Moura (Brazil), Mr. Sotirov (Bulgaria), Mr. Heinbecker (Canada), Mr. Valdés (Chile), Mr. Niehaus (Costa Rica), Mr. Bebars (Egypt), Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana), Mr. Pal (India), Mr. Satoh (Japan), Mr. Navarrete (Mexico), Mr. Sharma (Nepal), Mr. MacKay (New Zealand), Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan), Mr. Valdez Carrillo (Peru), Mr. Manalo (Philippines), Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea), Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone), Mr. Kumalo (South Africa), Mr. Erwa (Sudan) and Mr. Alcalay (Venezuela) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.*

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now consider the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations. Members of the Council have before them a letter dated 25 July 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/2001/732.

I welcome the distinguished presence of the Secretary-General at this meeting. Before giving His Excellency the Secretary-General the floor, I would like to make some introductory remarks.

I would like to start my presentation by telling you how honoured Colombia is to be presiding over the Council for the month of August. We are undertaking this responsibility with the firm conviction that this organ has an indispensable part to play, through the mandate entrusted to it by the Charter, to preserve international peace and security. Colombia, as is traditional in the many times that it has served on the Council, will act in strict accordance with the rules and principles contained in the Charter. As Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Republic, I am convinced that we will be able to benefit from the cooperation of the other members of the Council and the other States Members of the Organization and the staff of the Secretariat, whose work is indispensable for carrying out the mandates of the Council.

The problems that arise from illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and their impact on conflict situations have been the focus of growing world attention. Global, regional, subregional and national initiatives in this field call for efforts of international cooperation and the support of the organs and programmes of the United Nations, including the Security Council.

The debate proposed by Colombia has several general objectives. The first is to follow up on the small arms issue, almost two years after it was

incorporated in the agenda of the Security Council, on 24 September 1999. The second is to critically examine how the issue is handled in specific conflict situations that are being considered by the Security Council. The third is to deepen understanding of this topic in the Council, broadening the discussion with the clear and active participation of countries not members of this body. The fourth objective is to examine the role of the Security Council in implementing the Programme of Action that was just adopted, in July, by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, taking advantage of the momentum generated by that Conference. Finally, this debate should produce a series of practical and workable recommendations that we hope can be enshrined in a presidential statement to set out the activities of the Council and define the nature of its participation in this field.

In order to achieve these objectives, we have suggested some topics for consideration in this debate: the relevance of small arms in conflicts being considered by the Council; the contents of the reports of the Secretary-General; greater access to information on the illicit trade in small arms; strengthening regional and subregional mechanisms; the impact of small arms embargoes; the dispatch of assessment missions to countries requesting them; and, as I have said, implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. I invite participating delegations to refer to these topics in their statements.

I now call on the Secretary-General.

**The Secretary-General**: It gives me great pleasure to join the Council today as it considers the contribution it can make in addressing the devastating impact of small arms and light weapons on people and societies throughout the world.

Last month's United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects achieved important progress. I would like to congratulate the President of the Conference, Ambassador Camilo Reyes Rodriguez of Colombia, for his instrumental role in ensuring its successful outcome.

The Conference attracted widespread attention, with the world's media reporting extensively on the cost and carnage caused by these weapons. Civil society groups from across the globe were deeply and creatively involved. After tense and difficult negotiations, Member States forged a consensus among diverse views and interests and adopted a comprehensive Programme of Action.

Faced with the global scourge of small arms, the international community has now begun an important process of constructive global action. States have committed themselves to developing, strengthening and implementing norms and measures aimed at preventing, fighting and, ultimately, eradicating the illicit manufacture of and trade in small arms and light weapons. They agreed to place special emphasis on post-conflict situations and, in particular, to provide greater support to programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, including child ex-combatants. They also agreed to act responsibly in the areas of export, import, transit and retransfer of weapons, since legal weapons all too often and all too easily find their way into the hands of terrorists, criminals and drug traffickers.

States recognized the need to mark and keep accurate records that will enable timely tracing and identification. They pledged to improve the implementation of arms embargoes decided by this Council and they agreed to destroy illicit or surplus weapons as necessary. I am pleased to note that the Department for Disarmament Affairs has produced a handbook on ecologically safe methods of weapons destruction, which I hope will assist States in this regard. The Programme of Action calls for greater transparency and for education and public awareness programmes. And, to assess progress and maintain the momentum that has now been generated, it provides for a review conference to be held by the year 2006.

These are significant first steps in alleviating a grave threat to international peace and security. We must now consolidate these gains. A Programme of Action is a beginning, not an end in itself. Implementation will be the true test. I would also encourage Governments to continue work on those issues on which consensus could not be found at the Conference.

There is also the question of negotiating legally binding instruments. States have established international norms in the areas of nuclear non-proliferation and have adopted treaties banning chemical and biological weapons and anti-personnel landmines. The illicit trade in small arms and light

weapons is conspicuous for its lack of such a framework of binding norms and standards.

There is also a need to address the supply side of the problem. Since the mid-1980s, there has been an increase in the number of companies and countries manufacturing small arms and light weapons. Some of the world's wealthy nations are the main suppliers, but many developing countries also produce small arms, including for export.

The devastating impact on children also warrants special attention. Children suffer the direct effects of small arms violence, such as death, injury or displacement; the loss of parents and siblings; and trauma at witnessing violence. But there are also severe indirect consequences, such as the destruction of health and education facilities and the lack of opportunities that comes with stunted societal growth.

The glorification of guns also sends children a terrible message: that non-violent solutions are unworkable and unrealistic and that power is to be found not in one's skills or intellect, but by intimidating or inflicting harm on others. The fact that small arms require such minimal training has surely played a role in the recruitment of some 300,000 child combatants around the world. Children are the most vulnerable victims of small arms and light weapons and their special needs have not been given sufficient attention.

Small arms are easy to buy, easy to use, easy to transport and easy to conceal. Their proliferation exacerbates conflict, sparks refugee flows, undermines the rule of law and spawns a culture of violence and impunity. This is not just a question of disarmament; it is also an issue of development, democracy, human rights and human security.

Last month's landmark Conference was not meant to infringe on national sovereignty, limit the right of States to defend themselves or interfere with their responsibility to provide security; nor was it meant to take guns away from their legal owners. The targets remain unscrupulous arms brokers, corrupt Government officials, drug trafficking syndicates, terrorists, armed groups and others who bring death and mayhem into our streets, schools and towns and who ruin lives and destroy in minutes the labour of years. No country is immune from this threat.

There are no simple solutions and there is no single method of dealing with the impact of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Political commitments can make a critical difference in saving lives and easing suffering and this Council has a major role to play in making small arms a focus of urgent global attention. I look forward to continuing our work on this central aspect of international peace and security.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Secretary-General for his kind words about Ambassador Reyes' presidency of the recent United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

**Mr. Cunningham** (United States of America): I thank the Foreign Minister of Colombia for coming to New York to join us today and to preside over this open meeting of the Security Council. I congratulate him and his colleagues on Colombia's assumption of the presidency of the Council. I want also to acknowledge the presence of the Secretary-General. His attendance and his comments today reinforce the importance of this issue for all of us.

All of us in this Chamber today are well aware of the agonizing impact of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, especially in areas of conflict, where the problem is most acute. We commend Colombia for its initiative to convene this meeting, which continues the momentum of the successful United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. I want to join the Secretary-General in commending Ambassador Reyes for his leadership of the Conference.

The Conference reached consensus on a comprehensive Programme of Action: a solid foundation for dealing with this issue. The Programme, if diligently carried out by Member States, will engender significant progress towards curbing this illegal and deadly trade.

The United States believes that steps to tackle the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons must be practical and effective. The most effective way to prevent small arms and light weapons from getting into the hands of those who would misuse them is through strict export and import controls and strong brokering laws, and through ensuring the security of stockpiles of small arms and light weapons.

The United States has one of the strongest systems in the world for regulating the export of arms. Small arms and light weapons made in the United States cannot be exported without the approval of the Department of State. Nor can arms of United States origin be re-transferred without the approval of the United States. We rigorously monitor arms transfers and routinely investigate suspicious activities. In the past five years we have interdicted thousands of illicit arms, and we have cut off exports to five countries that failed to comply with United States law. Moreover, all commercial exporters of arms in the United States must be registered as brokers and must submit each transaction for Government licensing approval.

The United States has also been active internationally in stemming the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We offer bilateral financial and technical assistance to help countries develop national export and import controls, to improve border security, and to secure and destroy illicit stocks of small arms and light weapons in conflict-prone regions. We remain ready to continue that support.

My Government believes that the focus of the Conference, as reflected in the Programme of Action, was properly on Member States and on their obligation and their efforts to eliminate the illicit small arms trade. Thus, the Security Council's role is circumscribed. We do not believe that the Security Council should seek a more elaborate role beyond its competence; but it does indeed have an important role to play.

The paper (*S/2001/732, annex*) submitted by the Government of Colombia in advance of this meeting very thoughtfully focused on a number of important issues. The issue of the flow of information to the Council is a key theme. Information on the role of small arms and light weapons can be of great value in helping us evaluate specific areas of conflict, including decisions to establish or enforce Security Council arms embargoes. Also, as called for in the Programme of Action, the United States urges Member States to use all appropriate legal and administrative means against violators of Security Council arms embargoes.

Thus, while the function of the Security Council in accomplishing the Programme of Action is limited, we have the opportunity, through the leadership of Colombia, to thoughtfully define our role.

The Programme of Action of the first United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is just over one week old. Ensuring its success should be a priority; that success depends on the will and effort of Member States. The United States has a history of demonstrated commitment to finding practical and effective ways of curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We look forward to working with other Member States, and with you, Mr. President, to fulfil the Programme of Action.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the United States for the kind words he addressed to me.

**Ms. Durrant** (Jamaica): Mr. President, allow me on behalf of the Jamaican delegation to welcome you, the Foreign Minister of Colombia, most warmly. My delegation is certain that under your guidance this important debate will be extremely useful in seeking to meet the objectives you have outlined. We are particularly grateful that the Colombian presidency has provided an opportunity for non-members of the Council to participate in this discussion, as we believe that the Security Council can only benefit from exploring new approaches to a subject that affects all aspects of its mandate related to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The increased attention of the international community to the issue of small arms is both timely and welcome. The spread and use of those weapons has contributed significantly to the escalation and perpetuation of violence in conflict and post-conflict areas; it has brought more pervasive violation of human rights and erosion of social justice and has expanded the threat both to personal security and to the stability of States. The escalation in the level of violence that has accompanied the increase in the use of small arms and light weapons and its linkage to the illicit drug trade now pose a formidable challenge to the economic and social development of many countries.

There is no question that the greatest injury and loss of human life result from those weapons, most often within the context of national or regional conflicts. Particularly disturbing is the fact that the victims of small-arms violence are increasingly from the most vulnerable sectors of society, especially women and children.

Today's open debate, which follows the recent conclusion of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, under the leadership of Ambassador Camilo Reyes Rodríguez of Colombia, is, in our view, very appropriate. We also express our appreciation to the Secretary-General and to the Department for Disarmament Affairs for their exhaustive efforts to keep this issue before the international community. In that context, we thank the Secretary-General for his presence here today and for his valuable introduction to our debate.

The Programme of Action adopted by the Conference can be seen as the first significant initiative of the international community as a whole to map out a comprehensive set of measures for national, regional and international action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. The Security Council must build on that momentum.

There can be no doubt that the ready availability of small arms and light weapons has undermined the efforts of the Security Council to achieve many of its objectives. When it last considered this item, on 24 September 1999, the Council acknowledged the destabilizing accumulation of small arms as a contributing factor in the intensity and duration of armed conflict and in the undermining of peace agreements, complicating peace-building efforts and increasing the vulnerability of civilians to the indiscriminate use of these weapons in both conflict and post-conflict situations. The Council also expressed particular concern at the humanitarian impact and socio-economic implications of the excessive accumulation and transfer of small arms and light weapons. Since that debate, new situations have arisen that have served to further substantiate these concerns.

This reality is compelling reason for the Council to include integrally, within the framework of its assessment and decision-making, specific consideration of the role played by small arms and light weapons. We therefore hope that this debate will result in practical proposals and recommendations for the mainstreaming of small arms in the work of the Council, moving it from a tangential to a more central position in our deliberations. To this end, I wish to offer the following perspectives.

First, the Secretary-General should be encouraged to include an analysis on the proliferation of small arms in his reports to the Security Council on specific conflict situations, identifying sources of supply and financing for these weapons where possible. We note, for example, current reports that the civilian population in Burundi is being armed despite efforts to advance the Arusha peace process. This is an example of a case in which special briefings or reports by the Secretary-General with an analysis on the spread of arms could be particularly valuable.

Secondly, the Security Council should significantly improve its attention to the disarmament component of disarmament, demobilization, resettlement and reintegration (DDRR) programmes. Greater attention should be given to devising more effective programmes to ensure that peacekeeping operations respond clearly to the question of arms control. Such consideration should include the securing of accurate information on the origin, volume and nature of small arms and light weapons in the possession of ex-combatants and the civilian population. More accurate and comprehensive data collection is important for the success of the disarmament phase of any DDRR programme.

Such programmes should also include clear guidelines for the disposal and destruction of weapons, in order to consolidate peace and to prevent the migration of these weapons to other regions of conflict. In this regard, the Council should pay special attention to the destruction of weapons in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, repatriation or resettlement programme anticipated for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to preclude the access to these weapons by groups in other countries.

The Secretary-General has drawn attention to the devastating effects of small arms on children, and it is important that psycho-social rehabilitation of child ex-combatants be an important part of the DDRR programmes.

Thirdly, the sanctions committees of the Security Council have an important role to play in redefining the Council's approach to the question of small arms. There is an urgent need for more innovative strategies that address the issue of the illicit exploitation of natural resources being used by combatants for purchasing weapons. In this regard, we need to build on the important successes achieved by the

mechanisms in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola. It is imperative that greater attention be given to ways to achieve sharper and more targeted sanctions so as to limit combatants' access to resources. It is also important that information on financial transactions fuelling the illicit flow of arms be shared and made public. We also need to ensure that appropriate and regular information is provided on arms flows and effective enforcement of arms embargoes.

In due course, the Council should undertake an analysis of the lessons learned from the mechanisms established for the sanctions against UNITA, and more recently on Afghanistan. The importance of regional agreement and cooperation in this regard must be underscored. The Council could benefit from the results of the Interlochen and the Bonn-Berlin initiatives on targeted sanctions.

Fourthly, there is an urgent need to engage business and financial institutions, non-governmental organizations and other actors at the international and local levels in an effort to curb the ability of local groups to secure the resources to purchase illegal arms. In this regard, Jamaica reiterates its position that more effective domestic and international regulation of the legal arms trade, so as to stem the leakage of legal weapons to illegal markets, is central to any strategy to effectively control the illicit trafficking in and use of these weapons.

Beyond this, experience has shown that the most effective initiatives to date in controlling the spread of illegal weapons have been initiated at the regional level. Regional bodies are well placed to provide useful information and perspectives on the regional dimensions that characterize arms flows. We therefore strongly recommend more structured consultation between the Council and regional organizations seized of this issue. Towards that end, the Council may wish to consider holding consultations with the heads of regional organizations when they meet here at United Nations Headquarters next year, to consider follow-up for implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons relevant to the work of the Council and to the mandate of the regional organizations.

In his statement the Secretary-General underscored that the issue before us is not just a question of disarmament, but an integral question of development, democracy and human rights. The complex, integrated challenge that it poses demands a comprehensive, coordinated response. In this regard, Jamaica considers that closer consultation and cooperation with the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations system for the control of wrongful use of small arms and light weapons could only serve to enhance the effectiveness of the work of the Council.

Within this framework, we believe that there is a central role for the Secretariat to play in coordinating all United Nations activities concerning small arms. We welcome the important role that the Department for Disarmament Affairs, through its mechanism for Coordinating Action on Small Arms, continues to play in ensuring regular consultation and coordination among all entities within the United Nations system for which the matter of small arms is an integral concern.

Jamaica considers that these existing mechanisms could be strengthened to enhance in-house capacity to undertake more research and analysis on the nature and scope of the problem, and to provide practical assistance to affected States. There is still a paucity of data on the small arms phenomenon. Instead of establishing another group of experts, institutions like the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research could be strengthened with a view to widening the database of information that the Council could access.

We also note that the United Nations continues to experience difficulty in recruiting disarmament experts and trainers for service within peacekeeping operations in the field. This need could be addressed in part by encouraging Governments to establish databases of expertise on disarmament to enhance the United Nations capacity when the need arises.

These initiatives will, of course, demand additional resources, both human and financial. My delegation was therefore disappointed that the recent Conference did not result in a specific commitment to the investment of new and additional resources for the implementation of the Programme of Action. Without the injection of fresh resources, our efforts will be significantly compromised. We encourage better coordination among existing small arms funds, to ensure maximization of the impact of these resources. We also consider that it would be useful to explore the possibility of working more closely with the United Nations Development Programme to identify areas in

which its trust fund for support of prevention and reduction in the proliferation of small arms, which includes a "weapons for development" approach, can be of assistance in the disarmament component of peacekeeping operations.

The challenge before us to effectively address the problem of small arms is awesome. It is our hope that the Council will embrace the issue integrally within the scope of its work. This is an issue that must remain on the agenda of the Council as long as the death toll from the indiscriminate use of these weapons remains a sad reality.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Jamaica for her kind words addressed to me.

**Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh): We thank you, Mr. Foreign Minister, for your personal presence in the Security Council to preside over this meeting that is very relevant to the Council's mandate. We thank you and the Colombian delegation, under the able guidance of Ambassador Alfonso Valdivieso, for taking the initiative to hold this open debate on small arms. Your country's commitment to the issue of small arms has been effectively manifested through the leadership of Ambassador Camilo Reyes at the first ever United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, held recently in New York.

The well-articulated, forward-looking statement from the Secretary-General at the outset sets the tone for today's meeting. We thank him for that. Let me also thank the Colombian delegation for circulating a background note which sets the issue in perspective for today's debate.

With the changing nature of conflicts, the involvement of small arms and light weapons in sustaining and aggravating conflicts has increased manifold, with devastating effects on our society and economy. The last decade, which saw the upsurge in intra-State conflicts, also witnessed an annual toll of almost 500,000 victims, caused by more than 550 million small arms.

The arms resources nexus is now well documented in at least four of the recent conflict situations active on the agenda of the Security Council. As mentioned in the Colombian note, small-arms-related issues have been repeatedly addressed by the Council, with regard to protection of civilians in armed conflict; children in armed conflict; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; conflict prevention and peace-building. We believe that the rationale behind today's debate lies in this premise. Further, the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Small Arms Conference covers areas in which Council action could be relevant in appropriate situations. My delegation would therefore like to address six priority areas.

The first is illicit arms flows. The unbridled flow of arms across borders remains a difficult problem even after a settlement of a conflict has been reached. In his report of 11 February 2000 on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the Secretary-General refers to the need of imposing a local arms embargo and deploying United Nations forces along national borders to stop smuggling. The case of Kosovo is worth noting in this regard. By its resolution 1160 (1998), the Security Council imposed a prohibition on the sale or supply of small arms and light weapons. This needs to be further strengthened, with provision for severe punitive measures to curb large-scale smuggling.

Putting an end to the illegal ownership of arms and crossings of the boundaries of Kosovo was important, as the United Nations Mission there is mandated to hold elections soon. Curbing the widespread availability of illegal arms and the disarmament of the illegal armed groups is an important precondition for ensuring the safety of the population and the conduct of a free and fair election. In East Timor, as in Kosovo, the problem of small arms is recognized even though it has not come to the fore. With elections to be held at the end of this month, this issue needs to be given priority. The legislative measures taken by the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor in the form of small-arms regulation and security arrangements are commendable steps that could be replicated in similar situations elsewhere. Small arms are often used by armed groups operating in refugee camps. The Security Council has in the past addressed this issue because of its disruptive effect on post-conflict rehabilitation and resettlement of refugees.

The second priority is arms embargoes. States participating in the Small Arms Conference undertook in the Programme of Action to take all necessary measures against any activity that violates a Security Council arms embargo. In cases of armed conflicts

involving multiple actors, the active cooperation of neighbouring States is essential for the full implementation of arms embargoes.

The enforcement of arms embargoes depends fully on States fulfilling their obligation to provide the Security Council sanctions committees with available information on violations. Widespread violations in a number of specific cases necessitated more effective means of monitoring on a continuous basis.

The cooperation and assistance of Member States in compiling the information and updating the database is an essential prerequisite. The Council should call upon Governments to ensure that they provide the information required to update the lists regarding arms trafficking that have been established by the respective sanctions committees.

The third priority is regional cooperation. Through the sharing of information between law-enforcement and customs-control agencies, regional organizations can play an important role in monitoring the flow of arms. The Security Council, in addressing situations of armed conflict, should continue to encourage such regional actions and stress the importance of regional cooperation in tackling the issue of illicit trade in small arms. As called for by the Council in the presidential statement of 24 September 1999, States concerned should also strive to establish and strengthen voluntary national or regional moratoria or similar measures to prohibit or discourage the manufacture, trade and transfer of small arms in affected regions or subregions.

While taking into account their different characteristics, regions may benefit from the experience of others. The examples of the Economic Community of West African States moratorium, the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials and the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports stand out in this respect.

Fourthly, there is the human rights and humanitarian perspective. No discussion on small arms can be complete without addressing the human rights and humanitarian perspective. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee survey, released on the eve of the Small Arms Conference, makes clear the link between irresponsible use of lethal small arms and massive violations of humanitarian law and of the human rights of civilian populations. On the ground the examples of Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo only substantiate these findings. Among other things, that the presence and proliferation of small arms in these conflict areas acts as a multiplier of violence cannot be overemphasized.

We believe that Security Council action to address specific conflict situations can be greatly enhanced if the reports of the Secretary-General contain an analysis of the availability, stockpiling, lines of supply, brokering and transportation arrangements in respect of small arms and light weapons. Recent experience shows that tracking the financial network behind the illegal arms trade is of vital importance. The engagement of the Monitoring Mechanism on Angola Sanctions in tracking the financial network of UNITA is only a beginning. The success of this initiative should be extremely useful in other such cases.

The fifth priority is peace agreements. The issue of the disposal of arms and ammunition often becomes a stumbling block in the implementation of peace agreements. A determination about this question during peace negotiations and its appropriate reflection in resulting peace agreements is useful for stabilizing post-conflict security situations.

The report of the Secretary-General of 11 February 2000 on the role of United Nations peacekeeping in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration mentions the United Nations keeping custody of collected weapons so that they can be handed over to restructured armed forces. The Programme of Action has provided for the destruction of seized or collected weapons with prior marking and for keeping a record of the disposal. The Council should support destruction as the most effective mode of disposal and call for its inclusion as a provision in peace agreements between parties. We are very happy that the destruction handbook has been circulated to us today.

Sixth and finally, child soldiers. We particularly welcome reference to this aspect in the statement of the Secretary-General. Children are the most helpless victims of armed conflicts that are exacerbated by small arms and light weapons. Their plight becomes more intolerable with their forced recruitment and use as child soldiers. In this context, Bangladesh affirms the need for the declaration of child-soldier-free zones in various regions of the world.

In conclusion, it must be stressed that the challenge posed by small arms is multifaceted and involves, inter alia, security, conflict resolution and humanitarian dimensions. Clearly, Council actions in these areas must therefore complement the contribution of civil society, non-governmental organizations and industry. At the same time, a system-wide approach in the United Nations, epitomized by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Coordinating Action on Small Arms, must also be encouraged. In conflict areas, the Council would do well to encourage regional initiatives which can generate global action.

We believe that the issue of small arms and light weapons cannot be viewed in isolation of its peace and security perspective. Given the role of small arms in perpetuating the cycle of violence, we must focus on prevention. In this regard, I cannot overemphasize the importance of promoting a culture of peace and non-violence, particularly among children and young people, through education and advocacy, so that today's victims do not become tomorrow's perpetrators.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Bangladesh for the kind words he addressed to my delegation.

**Mr. Doutriaux** (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I would like to start by welcoming you to New York. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

Mr. President, I thank you for having organized this debate, following upon the adoption on 20 July in New York of the Programme of Action of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Traffic in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. I would like to warmly congratulate Mr. Camilo Reyes of Colombia, who presided over the Conference with much determination and efficiency despite all the difficulties encountered and the occasionally profound differences between the positions that were defended throughout the Conference. Today's debate enables us to take stock of this issue in the Security Council almost two years after the public ministerial-level meeting held in September 1999.

In a few moments, Belgium will speak on behalf of the European Union. I would just like to make a few comments on the items that seem important to us.

The threat posed by the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms is not a new issue. The Council notes on a daily basis the devastating effect of this traffic, particularly in Africa. The proliferation and illicit circulation of these weapons fuel and prolong the conflicts. They also make the maintenance and consolidation of peace very difficult.

Action is required at all levels — national, regional and international — to combat this scourge. We were gratified to see the outcome of the first United Nations conference on this subject, which was able to adopt a Programme of Action that identifies a good number of measures to be taken and efforts to be made. I shall reiterate the appeal made on that occasion by Minister Charles Josselin with respect to the responsibility of every State to ensure that the international community's response to this problem is commensurate with the hopes placed in it, particularly by countries directly threatened and affected by the excessive accumulation and illicit traffic of small arms, particularly in Africa.

I would like to underline a few priorities and explore a few possible avenues of thought for the Security Council. First, the Council must call upon all States to take the required measures to rapidly implement the Programme of Action adopted on 20 July and to follow up on the efforts under way, in particular as regards marking weapons and international cooperation to investigate the networks used for trafficking in small arms. We have seen the scope of this problem in the Council, in particular in the very detailed reports we have examined on the violations of embargoes in Angola and Sierra Leone.

We must draw the required lessons at a global level and set up a mechanism for cooperation among States that could thwart the action of the traffickers. France and Switzerland have developed a draft international instrument to that end which has received broad support from the international community and which is taken up in the follow-up mechanism of the Programme of Action. We are determined, on the basis of the provisions of the Programme of Action dealing with traceability, to pursue our activities to take this project forward, for it is at the heart of collective efforts to prevent illicit trade in small arms and to enhance the responsibility of States in this field. The next step will be in the General Assembly's First Committee in October on the launching of the United

Nations study on the draft international instrument on the traceability of small arms.

The Security Council must be aware of the scope of the damage caused by the proliferation and illicit traffic of small arms in countries undergoing domestic conflict or experiencing tension with their neighbours. As the weapon of all guerrilla forces, light arms are the easiest to use; military forces and civilians, children as well as men and women, are all in turn users — sometimes under compulsion — or victims. In societies that are already rendered vulnerable by a lack of political stability and a lack of equitable and lasting economic development, where conflicts have unfortunately not been prevented by political solutions, the accumulation of these weapons, in particular through illicit traffic, has the worst consequences.

Small arms, often ridiculously low-priced, are easily obtainable. Traffic in arms not only fuels the conflict under way but is also the spark that sets off the powder keg and is the instrument of a cultural violence that undermines any peaceful attempt to settle conflict. The countries concerned and the international community that tries to help have the greatest difficulty in getting rid of these weapons by means of programmes for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants. That is why it is important, as the European Union has done in the context of its common action, that States abstain on principle from supplying weapons to non-State entities or groups.

It also seems indispensable to develop preventive disarmament action. The recent report of the Secretary-General on preventing armed conflict is a timely reminder for States of their primary responsibility for prevention under the Charter of the United Nations. Practical disarmament measures undertaken for the collection and destruction of stocks of illicit small arms are of crucial importance and deserve to be developed further.

The Security Council could ask the Secretary-General to prepare, within six months, a report, based on recent concrete experience, on the principles, modalities and possible recommendations as regards the collection of weapons, disarmament and the destruction of the small arms collected. The Council could thus envisage the possibility of supporting this type of project in the context of its conflict prevention activities.

The Security Council might also benefit from information compiled by the Secretary-General, under paragraph 36 of section II of the Programme of Action, on measures taken by States and, if possible, on statistics available to him on the number of illicit small arms in circulation. The Secretary-General could be invited to provide this information, in particular in the reports that he will be periodically submitting to the Security Council on regional or subregional situations in order to draw its attention to potential threats to international peace and security.

Finally, I should like to underscore the crucial importance of strict respect for arms embargoes imposed by the Security Council, and I would recall also the need to develop a comprehensive approach, as the illicit trade in small arms is inherently linked to other kinds of trafficking — for instance, trafficking in high-value commodities, such as diamonds.

France would like to recall its proposal for the establishment of a standing monitoring mechanism for targeted sanctions and the illicit trade in high-value commodities in armed conflicts. The experience of the panels on Angola and Sierra Leone has demonstrated not only the usefulness of such monitoring mechanisms, but also the limitations of ad hoc bodies that deal only with certain targeted sanctions regimes and that are of limited duration.

A single standing mechanism would provide the Council and the sanctions committees with a reservoir of expertise and an institutional memory that could enable them to better understand the complex nature of trafficking and the interlinkages involved and to monitor compliance with embargoes, in particular as concerns small arms and the resources that allow for their acquisition.

The Programme of Action adopted on 20 July in New York must be fully and urgently implemented by all States. The Security Council and its members have a particular role to play in this area, in view of the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security assigned to this organ by the Charter. We hope that today's debate will enable us to undertake and support effective and collective action in this field.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of France for the kind words he addressed to my country.

**Mr. Eldon** (United Kingdom): Let me wish you a very warm welcome, Mr. President, to New York and to the Security Council. I thank also the Secretary-General for his very useful and thoughtful introduction to the debate.

Since the representative of Belgium will be speaking on behalf of the European Union later in this debate, I will keep my remarks extremely short, not least because of the length of the list of speakers we have today.

The first-ever United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in July, signaled a step change in the international community's effort to combat the uncontrolled spread and misuse of small arms. It must be regarded as the start of a long-term process with practical follow-up.

I should like to pay tribute, as others have done, to the efforts of Ambassador Reyes in seeing the Conference through to a successful conclusion. For our part, we were very pleased to have been able to make available Sir Michael Weston to act as a facilitator for part of the negotiations.

The success of the Conference will be measured by the extent of its impact on the levels of illicit trade in small arms and the destabilizing accumulations of those weapons. The impact of the whole complex of small arms questions on issues such as disarmament, demobilization, resettlement and reintegration (DDRR) and on children — both of which the Secretary-General has mentioned — is, frankly, obvious.

It is clear to us, therefore, that the Conference must be regarded as the start of a process. It is equally clear that the Security Council can make a real contribution to that process, because so many of the issues have an impact on our work.

I was particularly attracted by the idea of mainstreaming small arms in our work, as mentioned by Ambassador Patricia Durrant of Jamaica. It seems to me that the more we can do by practical measures to make sure that the small arms dimension becomes an automatic part of our work, the better off we will be. Perhaps it is a typically British sentiment, but I cannot help feeling that the more we can concentrate on doing things that will actually make a difference, the more they will be worth, as opposed to long and theoretical reports.

For this reason, we, as the United Kingdom, strongly support the Programme of Action which has resulted from the July Conference. We have established a comprehensive small arms and light weapons reduction programme, allocating a minimum of 19 million pounds — or around US$ 30 million — over the next three years to address proliferation and the misuse of small arms and light weapons and to support the follow-up to the Conference.

We will do our part. It is vitally important that the United Nations system and the international community as a whole should play its part too.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for the kind words he addressed to Colombia.

**Mr. Gatilov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Sir, the Russian delegation welcomes your presidency, in your capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, at today's important meeting of the Security Council, which was initiated by the delegation of Colombia. We welcome also the Secretary-General, and we are grateful to him for his assessment of the problem of small arms and light weapons.

We note that recently the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has begun to take on greater importance in various forums, from international organizations to regional conferences. Quite recently, the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects took place here in New York. At that Conference, a final document was adopted that defined the major areas for action by the international community in this field. The Security Council also considered this problem in September 1999.

Russia shares the concerns of a broad range of countries regarding the fact that the uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons can pose a threat to regional peace and security. Without a solution to the problem of the prevention and limitation of the dangerous spread of small arms and light weapons in the world, it will be impossible to settle conflicts, ensure the security of peoples and maintain stable economic development.

Russia, which is one of the major producers and exporters of small arms and light weapons, has adopted

a responsible policy in terms of supplying the international market. It is undertaking measures to tighten control over the manufacture, transfer and circulation of these weapons, and it is carrying out, on a planned and regular basis, the destruction of its surplus. Thus, in the period from 1998 to 2001, at the arsenals and bases of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, more than 420,000 units of small arms and close-combat weapons were disposed of, including 44,000 units during the period 2000-2001. In addition, in 2000-2001 the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation removed from illegal circulation 2,482 units of small arms and light weapons. Of these, 1,142 units were destroyed; the remaining weapons will be destroyed following the completion of criminal investigations.

We share the approach to the problem of small arms and light weapons of the many United Nations members who base their positions on the provisions of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter on the legitimate right of States to self-defence, which also includes the right to legally acquire necessary weapons. Everyone should carry out a responsible policy in the sphere of the supply of weapons to the international market, undertake measures at the national level to tighten control over the export, manufacture, and supply of small arms and light weapons, and strengthen the struggle against their illegal spread.

In recent years in our country laws and acts have come into effect that regulate the internal trade of weapons, including small arms. The rules regulate their manufacture, transfer and safeguarding and also their export to foreign States. Supplying weapons beyond Russian borders, including small arms and light weapons, is carried out through licensing and is under strict State control.

In the work of the Security Council, we often encounter armed conflicts in which the problem of small arms and light weapons plays not only an important role, but even a decisive role. We consider that during the course of substantive consideration of crisis situations, the Council should devote more attention to the problem of illegal and destabilizing supplies of weapons.

One of the clear examples of this is the illegal supplying of weapons to Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and the persistence of a great number of small arms and light weapons in the hands of the civilian population of that region. The existence of this problem was pointed out by the representative of Bangladesh. All of this is in direct contradiction of Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998) and 1244 (1999) and serves only to complicate the achievement of a Kosovo settlement, as well as to threaten the lives of peaceful civilians and the peacekeepers. Those who are parties to such violations are taking on an enormous responsibility for the consequences of possibly destabilizing the entire Balkan region. Unfortunately, in the past the dangers of this situation did not lead to the appropriate conclusions. The result is that we now have the development of the present situation in Macedonia.

Also on the agenda is improving the effectiveness of weapons embargoes imposed by the Security Council. This problem has also been spoken of by quite a number of speakers. A porous arms embargo can only aggravate the confrontation of parties to a conflict and undermine the authority of the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole.

We consider that the recent adoption of the Security Council resolution on the establishment of a monitoring mechanism for the implementation of anti-Taliban sanctions is an example of the proper way to resolve this problem. The objective is to enhance the effectiveness of the implementation of the embargo imposed by the Council in accordance with resolution 1333 (2000) on the delivery of weapons to the Taliban. We should like to take note here of the role of Colombia, as chairman of the sanctions Committee established in accordance with Security Council resolution 1267 (1999), in the preparation of and agreement on this resolution.

We support the involvement of the United Nations, including within the framework of peacekeeping operations and efforts to collect and destroy small arms and light weapons with the agreement of the relevant States and upon their request to the Organization for assistance. We are also ready to consider regional initiatives imposing moratoria or limitations on the export, import, and manufacture of small arms and light weapons, if these are voluntary and non-discriminatory in nature.

In this context, a special report of the Secretary-General could be useful for summarizing all of the work done by the United Nations on the problem of small arms and light weapons, including the

contribution of the groups of United Nations Government experts and the results of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We believe that the discussion of this problem of small arms and light weapons within the framework of the Security Council should devote greater emphasis to the consideration of specific situations that create a threat to regional and international peace and security.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his kind words addressed to me.

**Mr. Wang Yingfan** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I wish to extend our warm welcome to you, Mr. President, for coming to New York and personally presiding over this open debate. I would also like to thank you for your kind words addressed to me as President during July.

Ambassador Camilo Reyes Rodríguez, representative of Colombia to the United Nations Office in Geneva, successfully chaired the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and also facilitated the adoption by the Conference of the Programme of Action. This month, thanks to your country's efforts, we are able to have this open debate today on the same issue. I would like to express our appreciation to Colombia for its efforts and contributions in this regard. I also want to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for the statement he has just made.

In recent years, the excessive accumulation of and illicit trafficking in small arms have exacerbated wars and conflicts in certain countries and regions, undermined post-conflict reconstruction and given rise to serious humanitarian problems. This has drawn widespread concern within the international community. The Programme of Action adopted at the Conference last month identifies in explicit terms concrete measures to be taken to deal with this issue at global, regional and national levels, and it marks a good beginning for the international effort toward solving the issue of illicit trade and trafficking in small arms.

As the organ with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council frequently has to face the issue of small arms in its work, especially when reviewing regional hot-spot issues. In recent years, in its discussions of issues such as disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programmes, the protection of civilians, women, and children in armed conflict, and the prevention of armed conflict, the Council has always paid special attention to the issue of small arms. In 1999, the Council adopted a presidential statement on this issue. All this can be considered an important component of the international effort towards an early resolution of the issue of small arms.

The Chinese delegation supports the Security Council continuing to give, within its mandate, the necessary attention to the issue of small arms. In our view, such attention should be more reflected in the review of specific issues. Although the Council is not a specialized organ that deals with the issue of small arms, the work it does in this regard represents a crucial part in the global effort for this purpose. The Council should strengthen its cooperation and coordination with other relevant United Nations bodies on this issue, so that each can play its due part and synergy can be achieved.

The problem of excessive accumulation of and illicit trafficking in small arms is most serious and salient on the African continent, with a few countries there bearing the brunt of the impact. Therefore, we believe that special attention must be paid to the issue of small arms in that region. In reviewing conflicts in the African region, the Security Council should listen carefully to views of concerned parties on the issue of small arms and step up its cooperation in this regard with relevant regional organizations. In its efforts to promote peace processes, carry out DDR programmes, dispatch peacekeeping missions, adopt arms embargoes and launch peace-building processes, full consideration should always be given to the issue of small arms as an important factor.

Firmly opposed to the illegal production of small arms and supporting the efforts of the international community against the illicit trade in small arms, China has made its own contribution to the resolution of this issue. Among other things, the Chinese delegation to the Conference last month made a five-point proposition to that end, which I would like to reiterate as follows.

First, based on their specific national conditions, countries should formulate and improve their

legislation and regulations on the production, possession, transfer and stockpiling of small arms and take practical measures to ensure strict enforcement. Secondly, countries and regions should step up their cooperation and coordination in combating the illicit trade in small arms. Thirdly, the international community should further support countries and regions in their efforts to deal with the issue of small arms, and the United Nations and other relevant international organizations have an important role to play in this regard. Fourthly, while seeking to end tensions and conflicts in relevant countries and regions, the international community should also make vigorous efforts to help them develop their economies, eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development and lasting peace and stability so as to address the problem of small arms at its roots. Fifthly, the sovereignty of States should be respected and their right to the legal production, possession and transfer of small arms should not be compromised.

These five points put forward by the Chinese delegation are an outgrowth of our thorough consideration and study of all aspects of the illicit trade in small arms, as well as its underlying causes and background. We are confident that, so long as the international community works together, continuous progress will be achieved in dealing with the issue of small arms.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of China for his kind words addressed to Colombia.

**Mr. Chaouachi** (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to thank you, Sir, and your country, friendly Colombia, for having organized this open debate of the Security Council on the question of small arms. We also thank you for the very useful working document prepared by your delegation on this issue.

We also thank the Secretary-General for his important statement today.

Through its prerogatives in the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council is directly concerned with the question of small arms and light weapons. Clearly, this is the case each time the Council acts on a situation of conflict or tension in the context of peacekeeping operations.

Today's meeting is particularly timely given the seriousness of the problem and the conflict situations prevailing in several regions of the world. The convening of this meeting, two years after that held by the Security Council on 24 September 1999, reflects the international community's growing awareness of this serious threat. Indeed, the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which are easily transported and inexpensive, has for several years been at the heart of the concerns of States Members of the United Nations, several other international, regional and subregional organizations and the international community as a whole.

The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, recently held in New York from 9 to 20 July, falls within that context. The adoption at the Conference of an important document, its Programme of Action, represents the first stage of a lengthy process that we must support in order to end the threat of small arms. In order to be fully achieved, this Programme requires us all to work together.

New hotbeds of tension emerge and are sometimes transformed into armed conflicts that are internal or fought between neighbouring countries, with tragic consequences for innocent civilian populations. The circulation and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons contributes to increasing the intensity and length of these conflicts and to exacerbating them. Coordinated and urgent action on the part of the international community is therefore necessary in order to assume closer control and better management of this highly complex problem.

In this respect, we believe that the most effective way to prevent a conflict is to address the root causes that may unleash it, such as poverty and economic, ethnic and cultural problems, among others. Hence, the international community must act on all levels: subregional, regional and international; in all areas: disarmament, the maintenance of peace and post-conflict peace-building; and, simultaneously, at the level of prevention and combating the underlying causes of conflicts.

In conflict situations, the problem should be considered as a whole within the context of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. The Security Council has had a certain interest in this aspect, in particular in the course of recent years. The Council should maintain that interest by dedicating itself to further honing its action in this

sphere in order to improve its efficiency. In that context, we feel that the elements suggested in section E of the working paper prepared by the presidency are worthy of the Council's interest and consideration.

My delegation believes that the accumulation of weapons cannot in and of itself be described as excessive or destabilizing, since large quantities of arms under the strict and effective control of a stable State do not necessarily lead to violence. Contrarily, a small quantity of arms can be a factor of destabilization in other situations. This requires us to take into account the specific nature of the situation in each country as we search for a solution.

In that context, my delegation would stress the importance to developing countries particularly affected by these problems of strengthening their national legislation in the area of small arms and light weapons. They must, however, be further assisted by the international community in the implementation of programmes of national control, disarmament and rehabilitation. The producing countries, for their part, must ban the export of such weapons to conflict zones.

The Bamako Declaration, adopted at the ministerial meeting held in Mali from 30 November to 1 December 2000, reflects the commitment and determination of Africa to combat the illicit proliferation, circulation and trade in small arms and light weapons. This Declaration defines the vision of the African countries on how to eradicate this scourge through the adoption of a realistic approach and applicable measures that, if supported by the international community, cannot fail to help eradicate the trade in small arms.

Thus, our efforts must focus on the goal of strengthening regional and international cooperation, for this problem transcends the capacities of certain countries. That does not absolve those countries of their responsibilities. On the contrary, the initial efforts to find solutions appropriate to their specific realities must be made by Governments themselves. In this respect, we welcome the various initiatives undertaken at the national and regional levels, in particular those carried out on the continental level in Africa. In this framework, it is important to emphasize the initiatives undertaken by the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Bank and the Economic and Social Council, through the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and to perfect programmes to address this scourge.

It goes without saying that any action designed to cope with the problems of small arms and light weapons must take into account the legitimate right of self-defence of States, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter, and the right of peoples to self-determination.

In supporting the efforts being made at the international level to solve the problem of small arms, we believe that this should in no way distract our attention from the essential issue of nuclear disarmament, which is far from resolved and remains the greatest threat to all mankind. Attention to the issue of small arms and light weapons must be accompanied by the necessary efforts of the international community to achieve nuclear disarmament.

**Mr. Koonjul** (Mauritius): Allow me first of all, Sir, to congratulate your country on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. It is indeed a pleasure for my delegation to see you, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, presiding over this open debate of the Security Council. Your presence among us bears testimony to the commitment and tireless efforts of Colombia in the global fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The recent conclusion of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects under the presidency of Ambassador Reyes further underscored the importance that Colombia attaches to this issue. I am grateful to your delegation for providing a background paper (*S/2001/732, annex*) to guide us in our deliberations.

I wish also to express the appreciation of my delegation to the Secretary-General for his valuable statement this morning.

It is a widely acknowledged fact that small arms and light weapons are today the weapons of choice in armed conflicts. They continue to be extensively used by rebel groups, warlords and terrorists to sustain conflicts, to destabilize Governments and societies and to create havoc. The brutal civil wars in Somalia, Angola and Rwanda during the past decade, which claimed more than 2.5 million lives, were fought mainly with small arms.

These weapons are small and light only in name. The miseries they cause have been immense and widespread. Their proliferation remains a major threat to international peace and security. Having primary responsibility under the United Nations Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council has more than a moral obligation to address the issue of small arms.

Africa is the continent most affected by small arms and light weapons. In its resolution 1209 (1998), on illicit arms flows in Africa, the Security Council expressed grave concern over the destabilizing effects of the illicit flow of arms, particularly small arms, to Africa. Three years later, Africa is still awash in small arms and light weapons, which continue to fuel and sustain innumerable conflicts. Expert panels have established beyond doubt the nexus between the acquisition of weapons through illegal means and the illegal exploitation of natural resources, such as diamonds and other precious metals, which are used to pay for the weapons.

Although the Security Council is relentlessly making intensive efforts to find ways and means to end various African conflicts, we have yet to witness a decrease in the flow to Africa of small arms and light weapons, most of which are manufactured in the developed countries. Resolution 1209 (1998) stressed the importance of all Member States, in particular those involved in the manufacturing or marketing of weapons, restricting arms transfers which could provoke or prolong armed conflicts or aggravate existing tensions in Africa. Unfortunately, when it comes to Africa, such words are not adequately translated into deeds.

In the statement (*S/PRST/1999/28*) made by its President on 24 September 1999, the Security Council called for measures to discourage arms flows to countries or regions engaged in or emerging from armed conflicts. That presidential statement also encouraged Governments of arms-exporting countries to exercise the highest degree of responsibility in their transactions. In that regard, my delegation believes that, before selling weapons, those countries have a moral duty under international law to ascertain that the end user will put the consignments to rightful use. They should also be in a position to verify and confirm the identity of end users and their capacity to maintain control over the arms and the ammunition.

In June, the Council had a thorough discussion of the report of the Secretary-General on prevention of armed conflict (S/2001/574), in which it was acknowledged that there could be no effective strategy to prevent armed conflicts if the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons were not properly addressed. The Security Council can and should play an effective role in that regard.

With conflicts becoming more and more complex, peacekeeping operations should increasingly be viewed as part of a broader process that should include post-conflict peace-building strategies. Experience has shown that well planned disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes are an important and effective instrument for reconstructing post-conflict societies. In that regard, it is important that we strengthen peacekeeping operations to incorporate comprehensive programmes of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The first United Nations peacekeeping operation with such a component, deployed in Central America in 1989, paved the way for similar operations elsewhere. The United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, which had been mandated to carry out the destruction of weapons as part of their peace-building activities, should be emulated.

Experiences such as the one in Liberia have shown that large quantities of small arms which are not destroyed in the aftermath of a conflict represent a serious hurdle to the post-conflict peace-building process and hinder reconstruction efforts when they find their way into the hands of thugs, terrorists and other antisocial elements.

In both conflict and post-conflict situations, peacekeeping personnel and humanitarian workers have been the victims of armed groups. In most cases, small arms have been utilized to perpetrate these assaults, resulting in loss of life and undermining the confidence of co-workers in the field.

The disarmament process should not only involve the collection of small arms and light weapons; it should also include programmes dealing with arms management, including measures for the safe storage of these arms and for their eventual destruction.

Peace agreements should make provisions for accurate information on the size and location of armed

forces and for details of weapons used in the conflict in question. In that field, the cooperation and assistance of civil society and of non-governmental organizations is most desirable. Such provisions would facilitate the easy retrieval of these weapons for their eventual destruction. The destruction of these small arms not only serves as a means of creating an atmosphere of security, but also sends a strong signal that the countries emerging from conflict are now embarking on an era of peace. This would generate greater confidence among their citizens.

Most people in post-conflict regions will not readily give up their weapons unless they feel that their lives and property are adequately secure. For an effective and successful demobilization programme, former combatants should be given such assurances, and should also be the object of appropriate reintegration programmes — except, of course, when there is justification for prosecution for crimes against humanity. Incentives should be given to combatants to surrender their weapons. Similarly, adequate measures need to be taken when dealing with the disarmament and demobilization of child soldiers. Provisions should be made for their education and training, which would facilitate their reintegration into society. Special efforts should be made also to reunite such children with their families. The Programme of Action of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects includes several recommendations in that regard, and it is important for the Council to take them fully into account when formulating peacekeeping mandates.

In recent years, targeted sanctions have shown their effectiveness. The imposition of sanctions in the form of arms embargoes by the Security Council has to some extent helped in reducing the flow of arms to areas of conflict. Such measures also make the acquisition of these weapons more difficult and expensive. However, we note that unscrupulous elements continue to breach many United Nations arms embargoes. In the case of the United Nations arms embargo against UNITA, the Panel of Experts established by the Security Council pursuant to resolution 1237 (1999) last year systematically detailed and denounced the role of arms brokers and shipping agents in providing UNITA with arms. The Security Council, in resolution 1196 (1998), called upon States to adopt legislation making the violation of arms embargoes a criminal offence. Such a call was reiterated in the Programme of Action of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

But the Security Council will have to take further measures to improve the effectiveness of its arms embargoes. The ability of the Security Council, of sanctions committees and of the Secretariat to monitor arms embargoes needs to be enhanced, and the Security Council has to show the political determination to do this. It would be very important for the sanctions committees to be provided with the means to submit in their annual reports a section on the implementation of the arms embargoes, on possible violations of the measures reported to them and appropriate recommendations for strengthening the effectiveness of the arms embargoes.

The United Nations Secretariat should have a permanent pool of experts to verify any non-compliance with arms embargoes, which must then be followed by concrete actions. We also have to intensify the "name and shame" campaign against those involved in breaching arms embargoes.

Mauritius welcomes the decision of the Economic Community of West African States to renew for a further period of three years the moratorium banning the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons. Such initiatives should be encouraged and emulated by other regions.

The recent United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms has now added a new impetus for fighting the illicit trade in small arms at all levels. The Programme of Action is indeed an important road map that should guide us all in constraining the scourge caused by the illicit trade in these weapons. However, we Africans are somewhat disappointed that there was not a consensus on the issue of the sale of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors. The international community is fully aware that when it comes to Africa, it is the heavily armed negative forces that continue to undermine peace and security for decades.

My delegation hopes that in the coming years, good faith will prevail and a consensus will eventually emerge in this regard.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Representative of Mauritius for his kind words about Colombia.

**Mr. Strømmen** (Norway): Mali and Norway have a joint statement today on the issue of small arms, and I will therefore say only how much my delegation appreciates seeing you, Mr. Foreign Minister, and Colombia preside over the Security Council.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Norway for his kind words addressed to Colombia.

**Mr. Kassé** (Mali) (*spoke in French*): Over recent years armed conflict has claimed millions of victims, the majority of them civilians, and most of them have been killed by small arms and light weapons. The trade in these weapons is a genuine threat to peace and security, in particular in Africa.

Norway has cooperated with Mali on concrete and practical methods to reduce this threat in our region. Norway and Mali attach high priority to the question of small arms on their foreign policy agendas. Thus, our two countries share the same positions on critical issues linked to the problem of small arms, as was made clear during the recent United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. This is the first time, to my knowledge, that such a procedure is being applied in the Security Council, and it is my honour today to speak also on behalf of Norway.

Allow me to express to you, Mr. Minister, our great satisfaction at seeing you preside over our meeting today, and to hail the initiative that you have undertaken of holding this meeting on a subject to which our Governments attach high priority. In the light of the recent United Nations Conference, this initiative is indeed most timely. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to your compatriot, Mr. Reyes, the Ambassador of Colombia, for the impressive work that he achieved as the President of that Conference. Those of us who were there in the meeting rooms during the long nights of the Conference know that it required all his skill and insight. Otherwise, we would never have reached agreement on a final document. Allow me also to thank the Secretary-General for the statement he made this morning.

Mali and Norway hope that the Programme of Action of the Conference will provide an impetus to international work aimed at putting an end to the illicit trade and excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms. Although the Conference was a step in the right direction, we will not hide the fact that our Governments would have preferred to see the adoption of a more ambitious plan of action. We share this opinion with numerous countries of Africa, which is the continent that is the most severely affected by the proliferation of small arms. Mali and Norway believe that there is an urgent need for an international agreement on explicit export criteria that can be effectively implemented. We also need to continue to draw up international legal instruments on marking and tracing small arms and on brokering operations. We regret that the Conference was not able to achieve agreement on wording recognizing the need to establish and maintain control of the possession by individual persons of this type of lethal weapons.

At the regional and subregional level, we should emphasize that the African countries have taken important measures to reduce the illicit trade in small arms. The recent initiatives of the Organization of African Unity, the Southern African Development Community and the countries of East Africa are examples. Norway supported the pioneering work undertaken by Mali and other countries of West Africa to establish the moratorium of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on small arms and light weapons. The ECOWAS moratorium has just been extended for a three-year period beginning 5 July 2001. In addition, the measures of the Programme of Action dealing with the moratorium are now incorporated as provisions of the ECOWAS protocol relating to the mechanism for conflict prevention and management. The African countries have taken a step against the trade in small arms, which usually originate outside their continent. Today it is more necessary than ever before to reinforce the initiatives taken by Africa and to embark on a decisive stage in the prevention of conflicts through effective international regulations for the control and collection of small arms and the management of stockpiles. Mali and Norway call on the donor community to provide more substantial support to these initiatives, which represent specific measures for conflict prevention.

In this respect, the programmes for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants are one of the most important instruments available to the Security Council. In West Africa, DDR in Sierra Leone is an example of how crucial these measures are in United Nations peacekeeping

operations. This is why we need to seriously assess how to integrate this type of programme appropriately into future peacekeeping operations. As a result, Mali and Norway propose that the Secretary-General submit to the Council a report on the lessons to be drawn from DDR programmes.

As reflected in our recent debate on peace-building and conflict prevention, one of the lessons that reality has taught us up to now is that the collection of small arms alone is not sufficient. The establishment of a neutral security zone and judicial machinery is important to create a safe environment conducive to development. "Security first" is a motto that has already been used during actions for peace and reconciliation in Mali and for the establishment of the ECOWAS moratorium.

Practical disarmament measures must be put in a broader context and accompanied by targeted development programmes in order to provide better prospects for former combatants. In this respect, Mali and Norway are above all concerned by the situation of child soldiers, to whom particular attention must be paid within the framework of programmes of this type.

As is the case in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we are now confronted with an important challenge, because of which we are likely to be called upon to support programmes of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, which must also include measures for repatriation and resettlement. The organization and coordination of such a comprehensive programme will test the United Nations family's capacity to have all its institutions work together, along with other organizations such as the World Bank, to build a lasting peace. Of course, this will also be a test as to the extent to which long-term, sufficient and predictable financing can be established for the execution of that task. Mali and Norway would like to state their preference for a system in which DDR programmes, as a rule, would be financed through contributions of Member States.

Arms embargoes are another major instrument available to the Security Council. The Programme of Action clearly indicates that States have a responsibility to cooperate with the United Nations for the implementation of such sanctions. Small arms are often financed by conflict diamonds and other raw materials of great value, as the conflicts in Angola and Sierra Leone attest. Mali and Norway believe that the permanent monitoring mechanism for sanctions, which is now under consideration by the Security Council, will form a valuable instrument for the strengthening of sanctions and will thus contribute to our efforts to counter the illicit trade in small arms.

Mali and Norway see the Programme of Action that emerged from the United Nations Conference as the beginning of a process, and not as the end. The just-concluded, long and difficult negotiations to reach agreement on this Programme of Action taught us that numerous challenges await us in the work to come, particular regarding measures that fall within the competence of the Security Council. By our joint statement to the Council today, Mali and Norway wish to highlight the need to work together to address these challenges.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Mali for his kind words addressed to Colombia.

**Mr. Kuchinsky** (Ukraine): I would like first of all to welcome you, Sir, to New York and to congratulate you on Colombia's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. We also commend the important statement made today by the Secretary-General.

I wish to join other speakers in thanking you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate on the question of small arms. We agree that the problem of small arms, and particularly of their illicit proliferation, is one of the challenges that the Security Council, in accordance with its mandate, has to address. We share the view that the uncontrolled accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons may encourage the outbreak of hostilities, destabilize situations, undermine the implementation of peace agreements and hamper post-conflict peace-building efforts throughout the world. These weapons are often primary tools of violence in many conflicts, in particular in the areas where the illicit supply of small arms flourishes.

The global dimension of this problem was clearly identified at the recently held United Nations Conference. I would like to use this opportunity to thank Ambassador Camilo Reyes for his excellent leadership of that important international forum.

Bearing in mind the transnational nature of this problem, it is our deep conviction that the United Nations should play a leading role in the fight against

illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, as well as in restraining the proliferation of these weapons. In this process the Security Council has its own distinctive role to play. We believe that the Council can offer added value in such areas as strengthening the effectiveness of its arms embargoes, putting an end to economies of war and encouraging voluntary moratoria on arms exports to conflict regions, as well as supporting disarmament, demobilization and reintegration measures. We are convinced that the Council embargoes on arms supplies to the so-called hot spots could play a central role in checking the proliferation of and eradicating illicit trafficking in these weapons. Most importantly, the Council must ensure full implementation of its arms embargoes and other sanctions targeting the illicit trade that pays for these weapons.

Effective monitoring mechanisms should be further developed and put in place so as to prevent violations of arms embargoes. We attach particular importance to the need to enhance the effectiveness of these measures through their rigorous enforcement by all Member States. In this regard, we strongly support and believe in the need for establishing effectively functioning national export control systems to prevent illegal small-arms transfers. We note the importance of the effective functioning of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for former combatants, including the destruction of light weapons in their illegal possession as part of the peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building support activities of the United Nations.

While there are still great challenges ahead of us, on the positive side we should note a number of important developments in the struggle against illicit small-arms trafficking and the proliferation of such weapons. In our view, the most significant recent event was the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which gave the international community a unique opportunity to have a comprehensive analysis of this multifaceted problem and to develop a strategy for coordinating collective efforts in this field.

We welcome the final document of the Conference: the Programme of Action. This important document reflects realistic approaches and, in our view, will further facilitate concerted efforts by all States to reach an eventual solution to this problem.

We consider that the strengthening of international cooperation between border, customs and law-enforcement bodies in combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons requires the priority attention of States and regional organizations. In most cases such efforts require technical and financial assistance. Those countries that have the resources and experience should therefore be called upon to provide such assistance whenever necessary.

I would also like to highly commend the initiatives of the European Union and welcome the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) document on small arms and light weapons, which in our view constitute a significant step towards the elaboration and implementation of global measures in this area. We support various other regional initiatives, particularly in Africa.

We also attach great importance to the adoption of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Let me also emphasize that Ukraine pursues a quite responsible policy in the area of arms trade. The national system of export control provides for effective procedures in international transfers of arms, including small arms and light weapons. Our country also fulfils all its obligations as a party to the relevant international export control regimes. The legislation currently in force envisages strict measures aimed at preventing illegal arms manufacture, possession, use and transfer. Ukraine maintains its regular dialogue on these issues with member States of the European Union, the OSCE and other interested States. We fully abide by the relevant recommendations of the General Assembly and decisions of the OSCE.

Ukraine backs the measures aimed at the mandatory destruction of weapons confiscated from those possessing them illegally. I would like to inform the Council that such measures are being implemented in my country on a regular basis.

In conclusion, let me assure you, Mr. President, that Ukraine remains a strong supporter of the final eradication of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and will continue to take an active part in the international efforts to combat this practice, as well as to restrain the proliferation of these weapons.

**Mr. Cooney** (Ireland): First allow me to welcome you, Mr. President, to the Security Council today. Ireland is very pleased that you are here today to chair this important debate at the very beginning of the Colombian presidency. I would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate the Chinese delegation on the manner in which they conducted their presidency last month.

Later in today's debate, Belgium will make a statement on behalf of the European Union. Ireland fully associates itself with that statement, and I will therefore be brief in my remarks.

We welcome the President's initiative in ensuring that the Council picks up the question of small arms quickly in the follow-up to the recent United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was so ably chaired by Ambassador Camilo Reyes of Colombia. The Conference was both the culmination of a long preparatory process with many activities at subregional and regional levels around the world and the launching pad for what Ireland hopes will be a dynamic follow-up process.

While Ireland, with its partners in the European Union and a number of other countries, would have liked to see even stronger commitments emerge from the Conference, we very much welcome and endorse the very significant achievements that were reached. The Programme of Action represents a reasonable balance between different and sometimes competing interests. It recognizes that one-size solutions do not fit all and that while the fight against the scourge of small arms and light weapons is one shared by the entire international community and cooperative international action will be needed to defeat it, responses may need to be tailored to meet different regional needs.

There is no question that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a significant contributing factor in many of the conflicts that come to the attention of the Security Council. It also underlies many of the cross-cutting problems the Council is obliged to address — for instance, child soldiers and the increasing suffering of women and children in armed conflict.

It is possible to draw a number of conclusions from previous Security Council discussion on small arms and other, associated issues. First, the present capacity of the international community to control small arms and light weapons is unsatisfactory.

Secondly, primary action to address the issue of small arms and light weapons must be taken at both the national and regional levels. Action at the national level is essential because it is the primary responsibility of Governments to take action in promoting effective national legislation or administrative measures to regulate trade in small arms and light weapons. All parties must address this issue in an open and self-critical manner in order to achieve tangible progress in the near future. We must not permit the United Nations to be used as a vehicle for reinforcing obstacles deriving from domestic, legislative or constitutional provisions. Action at the regional level is also imperative simply because many of the issues can be addressed only in the context of regional security and through mutual cooperation.

Thirdly, it is incumbent on Governments to ensure full compliance with Security Council arms embargoes.

Fourthly, it is necessary to examine the issue from both the supply and demand sides. Manufacturing countries must put in place effective controls on gun holdings and also exercise restraint in exporting small arms and light weapons, including through the monitoring of the activities of dubious arms brokers. Although weapons are not manufactured in Ireland, the European Union and the countries associated with the European Union represent a major part of the world's weapons production. This is particularly true in the case of small arms and light weapons and places a special responsibility on the European Union to check the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and to cooperate in the alleviation of its consequences.

Fifthly, the problem must be addressed in a comprehensive and integrated manner.

Finally, international cooperation between concerned Governments, their licensing and judicial authorities, as well as the enforcement agencies, is essential if progress is to be made.

In your paper for this open debate, Mr. President, you invited us to reflect on the Council's contribution to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Conference. I think the first thing to say is that the Council can and must show leadership on the issue.

Our debate today is a welcome signal that the Council maintains a strong interest. It is important that the Council, in its own actions, reflect the thrust of the Programme of Action. The Council is already doing this in the attention it has begun to pay to the problem of child soldiers and in the importance it is attaching in post-conflict situations to the effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants and the effective disposal of their weaponry. We have heard a number of very practical proposals today, not least those put forward by Ambassador Durrant; these are worthy of further discussion.

The Small Arms Conference was an important step in a process that must be followed up. Ireland takes very seriously the politically binding commitments it has entered into in the Programme of Action and will work actively and cooperatively with other countries in the fulfilment of these, both inside and outside the Security Council.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Ireland for the kind words he addressed to me and to the delegation of Colombia.

**Ms. Lee** (Singapore): We would first like to express our appreciation to the Chinese presidency of the Council last month, and we join others in welcoming your presence, Sir, as you preside over our debate today. We appreciate the significant and constructive role Colombia has played in the small arms debate, most recently through the sterling work of Ambassador Camilo Reyes during last month's Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Thanks to his able leadership and that of Ambassador Carlos dos Santos of Mozambique, who chaired the Preparatory Committee process, we have today a watershed Programme of Action to guide our national, regional and global efforts to tackle the problem of illicit small arms. Although some countries have expressed disappointment that the Programme of Action does not go far enough, we believe that it is nevertheless the beginning of a process and a good foundation to build upon.

Today's debate is timely in focusing on the Council's role regarding the small arms issue. In this regard, we thank the Colombian delegation for its very comprehensive background paper in document S/2001/732. As previous speakers have also pointed out, the problem of illicit small arms is multifaceted and overlays many other issues, including conflict prevention, peace-building, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, sanctions enforcement and sustainable development, just to name a few. That is why the Security Council needs to act in tandem with the General Assembly to address the small arms problem on all these fronts.

In order to complement national and regional efforts, we believe that the Security Council should place special emphasis on countries that are most affected by the problem of illicit small arms and light weapons — in other words, those conflict and post-conflict situations where such weapons continue to wreak havoc. With that in mind, we would like to briefly highlight two key areas where we think the Security Council can play a vital role.

First, we must find better ways of implementing arms embargoes mandated by the Security Council. In this regard, we welcome the recent establishment of a monitoring and assistance mechanism for the sanctions on the Taliban in Afghanistan. This is a step in the right direction. As the Singapore delegation proposed during last month's Conference, a related initiative that could improve monitoring would be the establishment of an international database of authorized arms traders as well as a blacklist of traders convicted of illicit arms trafficking. As stated in paragraph 28 of the Secretary-General's 1998 report on dealing with the proliferation of arms in Africa,

> "The goal of public identification of international arms merchants and their activities has proved elusive, but perhaps no other single initiative would do more to help combat the flow of illicit arms to Africa". (*S/1998/318, para. 28*)

It is time to set up such an international database to properly identify legal traders and, perhaps more importantly, to make known the convicted illicit arms traders. This database will go a long way in addressing the problem of illicit arms proliferation, not just in Africa but throughout the world.

The second area I wish to highlight is the reference in the Programme of Action for the inclusion, where applicable, of provisions for DDR in the mandates and budgets of peacekeeping operations. My delegation welcomes this emphasis on DDR, as it will lead to a more holistic and effective approach. Put bluntly, stopping the supply of illicit small arms will be

ineffective if we do not also mop up the excess arms still in circulation.

No one will dispute that disarmament in a post-conflict situation is inherently a dangerous and difficult affair. In many countries engaged in, or emerging from, armed conflict, the possession of a weapon is closely linked to power, identity and status. It is therefore not surprising that many ex-combatants and dispossessed young men in post-conflict situations are reluctant to give up their arms. But the Council must address this as a priority issue, as the persistence of such arms impedes post-conflict peace-building and redevelopment.

In addition, the easy availability of small arms also threatens the security of United Nations personnel and peacekeepers. According to the 2001 Small Arms Survey, 456 international peacekeepers and United Nations staff were killed by small arms between January 1992 and March 1997. Perhaps some of these 456 lives could have been saved had there been more effective DDR.

For these reasons, we feel that it is vitally important to factor the DDR dimension into our peacekeeping considerations, to try to put a stop to the circulation of illicit small arms in affected States.

In conclusion, we think that the Security Council has a duty to work in partnership with the international community, including, where appropriate, civil society, to deal with the intractable problem of illicit small arms. By focusing on key priorities, we can make significant headway in resolving this problem.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Singapore for the kind words she addressed to Colombia.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia.

I have listened with interest to the opinions expressed during the course of this debate. They reflect the concern of the Secretary-General and the representatives of the States Members of the Organization at the excessive accumulation and uncontrolled circulation of small arms and light weapons in many regions of the world. They also recognize the close link that exists between the illicit trade in these weapons and several of the principal problems currently facing the international community, such as terrorism, organized crime and trafficking in drugs and precious minerals. All them also recognize the grave humanitarian and socio-economic consequences of this scourge and the serious threat it poses to international peace, security and stability.

It could not be otherwise. In the past decade alone, the use of small arms and light weapons has caused the death of millions of people, mostly civilians, including 2 million children. It was also responsible for 6 million persons seriously wounded or permanently disabled, and contributed to the forced displacement of approximately 20 million people. Some 40 per cent of the 500 million small arms and light weapons circulating throughout the world are believed to have been diverted into the illegal market and to have fuelled both old conflicts and those that have erupted since 1990, particularly in the developing countries. Many of these countries earmark more than 10 per cent of their annual gross domestic product for controlling this illicit trade and for treating the victims of armed conflicts.

It is ironic that most of the conflicts in which small arms and light weapons are used take place in the developing world, while most of those arms are produced in the developed world. This terrible irony requires the application to the global trade in such weapons of a principle that has already been accepted in the fight against drug trafficking: the principle of shared responsibility. We must all resolutely confront this problem and seek solutions that apportion responsibility in a balanced way, with a view to preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in these weapons.

The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held here in New York last month and over which Colombia had the honour of presiding, marks a first step in this direction. At that Conference, a firm commitment by Member States emerged — as expressed in the political declaration and the Programme of Action — aimed at preventing, combating and eliminating this trade at the national, regional and global levels, including measures both for securing international cooperation and assistance and for the follow-up to the Conference.

Progress was also made towards defining important elements in the fight against this scourge, such as the marking and tracing of arms, as well as the

monitoring of exports, surpluses and intermediaries in their legal trade.

Regarding the arms embargoes imposed by the Security Council, the countries that participated in the Conference pledged to adopt all appropriate measures to ensure their effectiveness and to cooperate with the United Nations system in the strict enforcement of those embargoes. The Security Council was urged to take into account, in the mandates and budgets of peacekeeping operations, activities related to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed actors. The Conference also reached agreement on the elaboration and implementation, at the national level, of effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes that include the collection, control, storage and destruction of small arms and light weapons.

I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to express, on behalf of my Government, our deep gratitude to all the delegations members of the Council that have made mention of the efforts of Ambassador Camilo Reyes, who, with the cooperation of participating countries, was able to make the Conference a significant first step in a process within our Organization that will undoubtedly take many years.

As President of the Security Council, Colombia favours an approach to the problem of small arms and light weapons that gives priority to those cases in which their availability and illicit trade help to create or exacerbate situations of conflict that are under consideration by the Council. I invite the Council to collectively assume concrete responsibilities in this area in order to ensure that these conflicts do not escalate, to maximize the possibilities of finding political solutions to them and to consolidate a true culture of peace and prevention in the United Nations.

We realize that because of its scale, the problem of small arms is beyond the reach of any individual effort. Nevertheless, its dimension cannot be an obstacle for us in promoting concerted action at the global, regional and national levels, with a view to preventing and combating this scourge by fully applying the principle of shared responsibility, which I mentioned a moment ago. My country has been committed to this process since the 1980s, when, with the support of several other countries, it submitted to the General Assembly the first draft resolution on the subject. At the regional level, we were active participants in the negotiations on the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials, a legal instrument whose importance is widely acknowledged by the international community. Lastly, as I have already mentioned, we presided over the recent United Nations Conference, the only global process that has been undertaken in this field.

Now, speaking as a member of the Security Council, I wish to state that Colombia stands ready to help this organ to fully assume its responsibility and make a true difference in the treatment of the question of small arms and light weapons in those situations that are under the Council's consideration.

I will offer some preliminary ideas to add to those already presented and to those that will be expressed during the course of this debate, all of which will be very useful for advancing the Council's actions in this area.

My first recommendation concerns the need for an effort to be made to systematize significant experiences that exist in the fulfilment of international commitments related to the question of small arms and light weapons. This should be done with a view to compiling the best practices in such a way that they can be used as a reference by the Security Council or by the Secretariat. The difficulty of obtaining accurate information on the availability of small arms in situations of conflict that engage the Council's attention means that any positive documented experience would be of great value. The Council may wish to invite the Secretary-General to coordinate such an effort in order to draw upon the opinions of staff members in the field and of interested States that are willing to share their own experiences.

It is also essential for the Security Council to complement and reinforce regional initiatives. My second recommendation goes in this direction. The Council should promote a continuous dialogue with regional organizations, particularly those in Africa, to mutually support their work in this field. The declaration by the Economic Community of West African States of a moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of light weapons in West Africa is a case that illustrates this need. The region is making a tremendous effort to prevent the proliferation

of small arms and light weapons, but the mechanism could be made even more effective if the Council helps to prevent arms suppliers from violating the moratorium.

A third recommendation concerns the need to provide the Security Council with accurate information on the question of small arms and light weapons whenever it considers a particular situation. The Secretary-General should be given a clear mandate to include in his reports a detailed section on the question of small arms so that it can be considered as an integral part of the treatment of conflicts. It is therefore of critical importance to develop a methodology that allows the Council to react to this phenomenon, for it is a principal source of political instability and a direct and real threat to the civilian population.

It is also necessary to emphasize the transnational character of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which knows no territorial, political or ideological frontiers. Consequently, as a fourth recommendation, and bearing in mind that many of these weapons originate in countries and regions where armed conflicts have been overcome, it is a matter of urgency that the Council assist in halting this trend by adopting strategies to thwart the activities of traffickers and criminals.

The fifth recommendation has to do with the need for closer cooperation among States for the destruction of surplus weapons in the possession of States, the voluntary collection of small arms and the confiscation of illegal weapons. This cooperation may include border control operations involving both police and customs authorities.

Lastly, as a country affected by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, Colombia wishes to express its solidarity with Africa, the region of the world that is most severely affected by this scourge, and to pay it a well-deserved tribute for the role that it played during the just-concluded Conference.

We have highlighted the growing concern of the international community over the consequences of uncontrolled proliferation for peace, security and the social and economic development of many countries and regions, and for the well-being of their peoples. I therefore appeal to all Member States of the United Nations to join the fight against this scourge by fully implementing the principle of shared responsibility, and in particular to the Security Council to forge ahead in the decisions that should be adopted in this area in connection with matters that are within its competence.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Peru. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

**Mr. Valdez Carrillo** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like first to say a few words of welcome and congratulations on behalf of Peru to the Republic of Colombia on having assumed the responsibility of presiding over the Council for this month. Peru is particularly pleased to take part in this dialogue under the leadership of a country so deeply committed to the establishment of a regime of control and cooperation to eliminate the current threats to security arising from the traffic in small arms and light weapons, as it demonstrated by its skilful conduct of the recent United Nations Conference on this subject. My delegation also wishes to express its appreciation for the document prepared by Colombia, which constitutes an important contribution and a useful basis for determining the role of the Security Council as regards small arms.

For Peru, this issue reflects a political and moral imperative that requires joint international action at all levels. For more than 10 years, the flow of small arms and light weapons in my country sustained terrorist movements, including those financed by drug-trafficking networks, which left in their wake more than 30,000 dead and billions in material losses.

On the basis of the reports of the Secretary-General for 1995 and 1997, it was possible to ascertain the broad and multidimensional scope of this problem that involves numerous participants at various levels. The multifaceted nature of the problem was recognized by the Security Council itself, through its presidential statement of 24 September 1999.

A conclusion shared by the aforementioned documents has been the recognition of the important role the United Nations, and in particular its main bodies, is called upon to play in this matter, both in setting and developing strategies for action and in disseminating information on, increasing awareness of and alerting people to the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of these arms, a recognition that places this matter as a priority on the current international agenda.

The Security Council, in the evolution of its duties, has taken on specific tasks with respect to small arms. It has done so on the basis of its own thinking, as in the open debate that took place two years ago. However, there has been no interactive dialogue with other bodies of the United Nations and it does not reflect a general, coordinated and unanimous vision belonging to the membership as a whole.

In this sense, Peru feels that the Security Council and other bodies of the United Nations, the General Assembly in particular, share a particular responsibility in this area. Precisely because of the overlap in their functions, this affords a splendid opportunity, through careful coordination, to effect an assignment of specific roles by engaging mechanisms created for that purpose and through the coordinated work of their respective presidents.

The Programme of Action adopted at the Conference on small arms and light weapons, despite the incomprehensible deficiencies apparent in its adoption, rightly provides the general direction that was lacking, above all at the regional and global levels, and constitutes the fundamental international framework for dealing with this problem. It recognizes, among other levels of action, the specific responsibility of the Security Council in underscoring the profound impact of these arms on the duration and intensity of armed conflicts and their effects on the most vulnerable sectors of society. To address this situation, the Programme of Action also underscores the importance of the role of regional and subregional mechanisms.

Peru considers that the Security Council should establish appropriate permanent channels of communication to enable it to gather the opinions of regional organizations on the particular circumstances of each conflict. This information should be taken into account before the Council incorporates into its mandates or recommends for inclusion in peace agreements such measures as arms embargoes; moratoriums on the import, export and manufacture of such arms; the control of borders; and programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants.

We believe that representatives of these regional organizations and of the countries involved should be invited before the Security Council prior to the elaboration and adoption of such measures. Furthermore, their presence would serve to provide the sanctions Committees with the latest information on the implementation of arms embargoes previously imposed by the Security Council. Another way in which these organizations and participants can express their points of view on this matter is through the representatives of the Secretary-General in the field, who can forward these opinions and include them in the reports of the Secretary-General.

With respect to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, the Security Council should play an important and essential role by incorporating the appropriate measures included in the Programme of Action into the mandates of peacekeeping operations and by implementing them. In this area, more detailed studies could be made of the experience gained in cases in which the voluntary surrender of arms was carried out on the basis of non-monetary compensation, as has been successfully done in such countries as Albania, El Salvador and Panama. These exchanges of weapons for farming or building implements, or for the construction of schools and clinics, provide a viable and imaginative alternative that can be used in diverse conflicts, based on a case-by-case analysis.

The need for coordination is also clear with respect to the United Nations role in promoting technical and financial cooperation to encourage an effective presence of the donor community in programmes including information on best practices for, inter alia, the collection, destruction and safe storage of arms stockpiles, which is simply another way of contributing to the prevention of conflicts.

With respect to the need to send Security Council missions to study the issue of small arms in the affected countries, Peru considers that the current fact-finding missions of the Organization, such as that which it recently sent to Kenya to determine the scale of the proliferation of these arms, carry out this function in a way that duly reflects the multidisciplinary nature of the problem, involving representatives of the Department of Political Affairs, the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme. They should therefore be sustained. In any event, the Security Council can certainly incorporate concerns involving the issue of small arms into the missions it is currently undertaking in various regions and conflicts.

Finally, Peru wishes to express its complete confidence that the United Nations and its principal bodies will, at their respective levels of action, provide adequate responses to national, regional and subregional expectations that have arisen today regarding this matter of profound moral concern.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Peru for his kind words addressed to me and my delegation.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

**Mr. Satoh** (Japan): I would like to thank you, Sir, for your initiative in holding this open debate in a very timely manner. It is indeed encouraging that the Security Council remains engaged with this important issue, which has such profound implications for international security.

I would also like to express our appreciation to the Government of Colombia, and particularly Ambassador Camilo Reyes, for the constructive role they played in leading the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to the adoption of the Programme of Action.

The Japanese Government has actively participated in international efforts to address the issue of small arms ever since former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali first brought the problem to the attention of the international community in 1995. Building upon the recommendations of the Panel of Experts and the Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, both of which were chaired by Ambassador Mitsuro Donowaki, the Japanese Government introduced the General Assembly resolution that led to the convening of the Conference on small arms. The Conference on small arms yet again impressed upon all those associated with it the tragic suffering that small arms have inflicted upon people all over the world and reaffirmed the urgent need to halt the excessive accumulation and illicit transfer of these weapons.

The Programme of Action adopted at the Conference will certainly prove to be an historic first step in addressing the complicated issue of small arms, although we are aware that not all of the participating countries are fully satisfied with the measures contained in it. In this context, we would like to take this opportunity to recognize the significant contribution that African countries made to the success of the Conference, both at the preparatory stage, under the able leadership of Ambassador Dos Santos of Mozambique, and, most importantly, at the closing moments of the Conference, when they displayed the commendable political will to agree to a painful compromise in order to ensure the adoption of the Programme of Action by consensus. It is now incumbent upon the international community to make the Programme of Action truly meaningful for the countries in Africa severely affected by small arms.

I must hasten to add that the countries suffering from the scourge of small arms are not confined to Africa. As Japan's Senior Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Seiken Sugiura, stressed at the Conference, it is the responsibility of the international community to extend support and assistance in response to the aspirations and will of the people in all the affected countries and regions.

It is now up to all of us to ensure that the Programme of Action is effectively implemented and to foster even greater international cooperation to free the world from the threat of small arms. The Japanese Government, for its part, plans to host a meeting of experts at the beginning of next year with a view to furthering cooperation with countries that are committed to resolving this issue. The Japanese Government is also planning to expand, possibly in cooperation with other donor countries and United Nations agencies, weapons-for-development projects to Africa, the Balkans and the Asia-Pacific region, based upon the pilot project Japan has developed with the European Union in Cambodia. Furthermore, we are planning to conduct research on past small arms collection projects with a view to establishing guidelines for future efforts. Japan's additional contribution of $900,000 to the trust fund of the Department for Disarmament Affairs is aimed at promoting such projects for resolving problems related to small arms.

I would like to add that, for the purpose of ensuring the effective implementation of the Programme of Action and of further improving the regime, it is important that a review conference be convened within the next several years.

In closing, I would like to call upon the Security Council, which has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, to pay particular attention to the issue of small arms when it considers concrete conflict-prevention measures. The mandates of peacekeeping operations established by the Council address small-arms issues in various ways, such as the collection and storage of weapons. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts too have become typical features of recent peacekeeping operations. More important, the establishment of peacekeeping operations provides the international community with valuable opportunities to improve and develop the way it deals with the issue of small arms.

That issue must inevitably be addressed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the local conditions involved. In that context, due consideration should be given to the issue of small arms when the Security Council sends a fact-finding mission to an area of conflict.

Because the Council can be a driving force in efforts to overcome the threat of small arms, we encourage it to remain mindful of its responsibilities and to continue to pay careful attention to activities undertaken by various countries and organizations to the same end.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Japan for the kind words he addressed to me.

A number of speakers remain on my list. In view of the lateness of the hour, and with the agreement of members, I intend to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

*The meeting was suspended at 1.15 p.m.*

United Nations S/PV.4355 (Resumption 1)

# Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

*Provisional*

## 4355th meeting

Thursday, 2 August 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

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|---|---|---|
| *President:* | Mr. Fernández de Soto | (Colombia) |
| *Members:* | Bangladesh | Mr. Chowdhury |
| | China | Mr. Wang Yingfan |
| | France | Mr. Doutriaux |
| | Ireland | Mr. Cooney |
| | Jamaica | Miss Durrant |
| | Mali | Mr. Kassé |
| | Mauritius | Mr. Koonjul |
| | Norway | Mr. Strømmen |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Gatilov |
| | Singapore | Ms. Lee |
| | Tunisia | Mr. Chaouachi |
| | Ukraine | Mr. Kuchinsky |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Eldon |
| | United States of America | Mr. Cunningham |

## Agenda

Small arms

Letter dated 25 July 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/732).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

01-49128 (E)

*The meeting was resumed at 4.10 p.m.*

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Thailand and Nigeria, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. Singhara Na Ayudhaya (Thailand) and Mr. Mbanefo (Nigeria) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.*

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I would also like to ask representatives, as far as possible, given that we have 25 speakers on the list, to ensure that speeches are to the point.

The next speaker is the representative of Mexico. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

**Mr. Navarrete** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Mexico is very gratified to have the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia presiding over this meeting of the Security Council. Allow me to convey to you, Sir, my country's great appreciation for your Government's firm support for the consideration of the issue of small arms in international forums.

After the statements that we heard this morning, my delegation does not wish to be repetitive or overwhelm the Council with a lengthy and cumbersome speech on small arms and light weapons, but we would like to respond to the invitation extended by the Government of Colombia to consider this issue in the context of the activities and mandates of the Security Council.

In a broader context, that of the whole international community, the recently concluded United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects — which has already been referred to many times — demonstrated a broad interest in taking a multilateral approach to this issue.

The problem became of particular concern in the mid-1990s. The estimated figures for 1995 indicated that approximately 500 million small arms were circulating worldwide, as you noted in your statement, Mr. President. Recent estimates speak of about 600 million small arms, which originate from 600 manufacturers in 95 countries. When the Council discussed this issue two years ago, in September 1999, concern was expressed about the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the destabilizing effects of their excessive accumulation and circulation, especially in regions of conflict. Moreover, the Secretary-General was requested to include in the studies of the problem the humanitarian and socio-economic consequences of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons, of transfers of these weapons and of their illicit production and sale.

In the two years that have elapsed, notwithstanding the arms embargoes imposed by the Security Council, the excessive availability of small arms and light weapons has not been reduced in countries in conflict.

We believe it necessary to once again appeal to the exporting countries to exercise a greater level of responsibility in their international transfers of such weapons. This was eloquently underscored by the representative of Mauritius during this morning's debate. We would like to note that we should continue the practice established by the report of the Chairman of the Security Council Committee on the situation in Angola, which raised the question of the use of arms traffickers and the provenance of arms obtained by illicit means, and made recommendations on how to tackle these problems. As the Security Council investigates the activities of intermediaries in the small arms trade, and the trail of financial transactions involved in this field, it will have at its disposal more information on which to formulate recommendations and take decisions.

The question of small arms is multidimensional. Mexico believes that the Member States of this Organization should make a commitment to provide weapons only to those Governments that are acting in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. As was stated this morning by the Ambassador of Bangladesh, the Member States should also undertake to establish a worldwide zone free of child soldiers. The Security Council should have at its disposal specific information on small arms in those

cases where there is a threat to international peace and security. To this end, the coordination mechanisms within the United Nations system could be improved, and communications with subregional and regional organizations could be strengthened, as well as with non-governmental organizations.

The Security Council should study in depth the lessons learned in the area of small arms. The Lessons Learned Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in conjunction with the Department for Disarmament Affairs, could present a report on the excessive availability of small arms and light weapons in conflict situations and the repercussions of such weapons on peace-building.

Mexico believes that advisory missions to consider the question of small arms in regions of interest to the Security Council should have the consent of the State or States involved. In a broader context, such missions might help to define the specific assistance needs of States suffering from excessive accumulations of this kind of weaponry.

In conclusion, I reaffirm my country's firm commitment to the full implementation of the measures proposed in the Programme of Action of the previously mentioned United Nations Conference.

We are confident that the Security Council and the General Assembly will continue to consider the issue of small arms within their respective mandates. The outcome of that consideration will be examined in the review conference in 2006.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Mexico for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Argentina. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table.

Before giving the floor to the representative of Argentina, I wish to express to the Mission of Argentina the sorrow of the presidency concerning the death a few days ago of Ana María Moglia, who was a member of the Argentine delegation in the Council and an outstanding colleague of many of those present here. May our condolences be conveyed to her family in Buenos Aires.

I now invite the representative of Argentina to make his statement.

**Mr. Listre** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for being present today at this important debate on small arms. I commend you, Sir, on your initiative, and on the excellent work that has been done by the Mission of Colombia, headed by Ambassador Valdivieso, in preparing for this meeting.

I would also like to thank you most especially, Mr. President, for your condolences for the loss of an excellent civil servant, an excellent friend and an excellent servant of the United Nations, Counsellor Ana Moglia, and I am sure members of the Council who were here last year when Argentina was a member will remember her qualities. I am particularly grateful for your words of condolence and I will certainly convey them to her family.

Today, the international community is aware of the magnitude of the problem caused by the proliferation and the excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons around the world. As has been noted in this debate, the United Nations has made it clear that the uncontrolled circulation and easy availability of these weapons currently causes the death of more than 500,000 individuals annually as a consequence of civil war, conflicts and crime. It is estimated that 40 per cent of the global arms market is diverted to the black market, fuelling the majority of regional conflicts that have arisen since 1990.

The Secretary-General has noted that small arms and light weapons must be the next focus of urgent global attention, since these arms exacerbate conflicts, cause flows of refugees, undermine international humanitarian law and engender a culture of violence and impunity. These arms destroy the social fabric and constitute a menace to peace, development, democracy and human rights.

Reducing the steadily growing access to these arms in the world is one of the most serious challenges the international community faces today.

To combat this, more laws and regulations are needed, and especially the political commitment to act with resolve when looking for affective answers to solve this problem. To do this, it is necessary to adapt and optimize existing resources in order to prevent, control and reduce this menace responsibly and efficiently.

Every region and country has its own characteristics, and the solution must be developed taking these particularities into account.

In contrast to the progress achieved in the field of arms of massive destruction, a framework of global standards and norms for eliminating the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons was lacking.

Among the initiatives previous to the recent Conference in New York, we can mention the United Nations resolutions on the matter, and especially the commitment shown by heads of State at the Millennium Summit, where it was resolved to take concrete action to end illicit arms-trafficking as part of a broad common vision for a secure and peaceful world.

Aside from the initiatives mentioned, we should add the pioneering work of the Organization of American States in creating the first binding regional instrument on the issue: the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials, which supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects has marked a turning point in the stance of States in combating illicit trafficking in these weapons. The Programme of Action adopted at that Conference establishes a series of measures to put an end to illicit trafficking, to try to make transfers of weapons transparent and to support regional disarmament measures.

Argentina notes with satisfaction that this included a commitment to establish penal measures criminalizing the manufacture and the illicit trafficking of these arms, as well as administrative regulations and monitoring bodies for their production, circulation, export and import. It is encouraging to see the development of international criteria on the arms brokering, the detection of the routes of illicit trade and the location of its points of supply.

We underscore in this respect the appeal to countries to cooperate with the United Nations system for the effective implementation of arms embargoes decreed by the Security Council in accordance with the Charter.

An international programme of action could not be implemented if the proper instruments were not developed at the national, subregional, regional and international levels. Within the framework of the Southern Common Market and Bolivia and Chile, initiatives have been taken to address this problem: first, the creation of a common registry of vendors and purchasers of firearms, their parts and ammunition; and secondly, the creation of a firearms group, whose mission will be to harmonize legislation, increase cooperation and act as the focal point for coordination in following up the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference.

Argentina, like many countries, is not spared the consequences of the illicit circulation of small arms. The increase in the rate of urban violence, which in my country has taken a tragic number of innocent victims, is often the consequence of the illicit arms trade and the ease with which any individual can acquire a gun on the black market. These facts are a cause of great concern and are among our Government's priorities for action.

We trust that the Security Council will play an important role in adopting an integrated approach to this problem. We believe that there are two important aspects to be taken into account: the first is the inclusion in the mandates of peacekeeping operations effective measures for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants; the second is the creation of mechanisms to monitor effective compliance with sanctions. The mechanism created for Angola and that established on 30 July by resolution 1363 (2001) for Afghanistan are positive concrete examples.

The goal is to pool our efforts to tackle a multifaceted problem that cannot be attacked on just one front but must be attacked on various fronts simultaneously and concertedly. Coordination and international cooperation are fundamental for achieving this. Only in this way can the problems of war and violence be reduced to manageable levels, and conditions for the security of the population be made favourable. This is an indispensable factor for life, liberty, peace, solidarity, economic progress and harmony in international relations.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Argentina for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribe on my list is the representative of Chile. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

**Mr. Valdés** (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, Mr. Foreign Minister, let me welcome your presence in this Chamber, which underlines the importance of the topic that brings us here. Let me also congratulate Colombia on the initiative of convening an open debate on the question of small arms in the Security Council.

There is no doubt that this is a problem with universal dimensions, which our Organization should address not only in the Assembly but also in the Security Council. In this regard, the presidential statement of the Security Council on 24 September 1999, which incorporated this item on its agenda, recognized that what we are facing is "multifaceted and involves security, humanitarian and development dimensions". (*S/PRST/1999/28, second paragraph*)

Because we are really dealing with "small arms of mass destruction", it is vital to take every opportunity to keep alive the commitment to combat this scourge on all fronts.

The question of small arms is a complex issue that represents a serious threat to human security. We believe that we must undertake to eradicate this scourge through measures that promote respect for human rights, the rule of law and good governance, as well as equitable socio-economic development and the implementation of programmes to eradicate the culture of violence and replace it with a culture of peace.

Here we must take note of the outcome of the recent United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In this context, we fully support the substance of the presidential statement made by Ambassador Camilo Reyes of Colombia, who so successfully guided the proceedings of the Conference.

We agree that the Conference represented a very significant step, in that it was the starting point of a process to address in a comprehensive manner one of the most urgent issues in the area of international peace and security.

However, we, too, were disappointed at the fact that it was not possible to reach agreement on recognizing such significant aspects of this struggle as the establishment of restrictions on the private ownership of weapons and the need to eliminate their transfer to non-State actors. We are convinced that agreement on this last aspect would have markedly facilitated the work of the Council. For this reason, we deem it appropriate to note that the Secretary-General highlighted the potential benefits that the international community might expect from an understanding on these issues.

On this particular point, we believe it important to reiterate that at the Conference, Chile expressed its conviction that it was essential to make progress on the elaboration of an international instrument to strictly limit the manufacture of, and illicit trade in, these weapons. It stated also that, in a matter that is so closely bound up with human suffering, we should promote restrictions that will safeguard life, above and beyond simple free-trade considerations.

We believe that the Security Council must play an active and clear-cut role in this process and that it should in its work consider the fresh responsibilities that the international community has set out in the Programme of Action of the Conference. For this reason, we would to highlight a number of initiatives that take on particular significance in the light of that document.

It is clear that the question of the proliferation of small arms is a source of immediate concern in post-conflict peace-building situations. It is therefore essential for the Security Council to consider including in peace agreements and in the mandates of peacekeeping missions specific measures to give effect to programmes for disarmament and arms destruction and for the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, with particular emphasis on the situation of child soldiers.

We believe also that we must incorporate in the process of planning peacekeeping operations experts who are skilled in the area of international humanitarian law, human rights and the rights of refugees, including provisions relating to children and gender issues, so as to ensure the effective implementation of these principles. As a reflection of the importance of these programmes, it is also essential to allocate the necessary resources for their implementation.

It is clear that illicit flows of small arms complicate the work of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. Not only should the States involved strive to restrict these flows, but the

Security Council should also make rigorous use of the monitoring mechanisms available to it. In other words, this body should not simply confine itself to calling for the implementation of these measures; it should ensure their full and effective implementation.

We believe that efforts to restrict the flow of small arms will require a change in the way in which sanctions are applied. On this particular point, the Council will have to continue to explore new ways of improving the effectiveness of arms embargoes by reviewing the functioning of existing sanctions committees.

It is extremely important to strengthen preventive measures in order to restrict the use of these weapons and avert the need to resort to the programmes mentioned earlier. In order to do so, the Security Council should have available to it, in its consideration of each conflict, the relevant information about the illicit use of small arms and military weapons. This would make it possible to give priority to such illicit use in the general framework of the efforts deployed by the Security Council in the process of the restoration of stability.

In this regard, the Security Council must play a dynamic role in educating Member States about the negative effects of sustained flows of weapons to hotbeds of tension and to areas of conflict. These efforts can be enhanced through the exchange of information and the development of close international cooperation with the various regional and subregional bodies involved in the monitoring the destabilizing proliferation of these weapons.

We would like to conclude by highlighting the tremendous responsibility we have in alleviating the plight of peoples that are hostage to crime and armed conflict, which are fuelled by the excessive and uncontrolled circulation of these weapons. We must find solutions to promote social and economic development as well as national, regional and international stability. As Ambassador Reyes noted at the conclusion of the Conference on the illicit trade in such weapons, we should continue to address this question in all its aspects until the conscience of mankind is at long last satisfied that all that can be done has in fact been done, in order to alleviate this global tragedy.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Chile for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Brazil. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

**Mr. Moura** (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, the delegation of Brazil joins previous speakers in welcoming your initiative and in expressing our satisfaction at seeing the brotherly country of Colombia presiding over the Council. Your presence here reflects the importance of this moment for Colombia. We are certain that during the month of August, the Council will be in very good hands under the leadership of Ambassador Valdivieso. I am also grateful to the Secretary-General for his important statement this morning.

No other United Nations body, in its daily activities, experiences the effects and consequences of the uncontrolled circulation and use of small arms as does the Council. When this matter was dealt with in the Council for the first time two years ago, Brazil had the honour of occupying one of the non-permanent seats. Our then Foreign Minister had the opportunity to participate in a productive debate on an issue that was new and not very visible at the time. There can be no doubt that the ministerial meeting of the Council and the presidential statement issued at that time helped to give this issue visibility on the world scene.

Much has changed since then. The situation is more complex and fraught with challenges. Mechanisms for addressing the question of small arms are much more developed. Thanks to extensive discussions, the issue is much better understood, and the many dimensions of its manifestations in various regions of the world have been recognized. The notion of the primary responsibility of States has been consolidated.

Two months ago the General Assembly adopted the Protocol against the Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. In our region, the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms came into force. More important than any of this, we managed to agree on a Programme of Action in the context of the recently concluded United Nations

Conference on the Illicit Traffic in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Therefore the Security Council today is debating this issue in a context in which the international community has already laid common bases for addressing these problems.

It is important to conserve the achievements of the Conference. The success was due to a large extent to the skills of Ambassador Camilo Reyes, and it is essential that we give the worldwide follow-up process that has already been agreed upon the opportunity to yield fruit. We are pleased to note that the Colombian initiative to further pursue this issue recognizes the limits of the jurisdiction of the Security Council in this field and the need to avoid creating a process parallel to that of the Conference. Small arms are being addressed by the Security Council as elements in some of its items and not from any conceptual perspective, which could encompass the whole set of problems in all their aspects.

For Brazil, the dimension of the phenomenon of small arms and light weapons that is of particular concern to the Security Council is the conflict dimension. The role of the Council with respect to small arms relates to conflict prevention, the implementation of arms embargoes, the collection of surplus arms in the post-conflict phase and the work of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants.

We know that this important role is not exclusive to the Council, but it should be combined with the efforts of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, in particular, and with regional and subregional initiatives. Similarly, an integrated and balanced approach to the phenomenon that takes into account, for example, the fact that small arms are also something that fuel organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism would go beyond the mandate of the Security Council.

In the area in which this body has jurisdiction, it seems essential to us to highlight the importance of securing strict monitoring of the implementation of arms embargoes decided upon by Council resolutions. We would like here to place on record our recognition for the efforts of the sanctions committees to ensure monitoring of measures to combat illicit trade in firearms in regions or entities that are subject to sanctions and to make public the actions of persons and countries that are involved in sanctions violations.

The reduction of the military capacity of UNITA in Angola is proof that the Security Council, in conformity with the mandate of relevant resolutions, may play a key role in worldwide efforts to combat illegal arms flows.

We are also convinced that two of the major objectives of the Council in the area of small arms — preventing conflicts and strictly implementing arms embargoes — have been strengthened in the Conference in the sense that it was able to adopt a political undertaking to provide small arms and light weapons only to governments or entities properly authorized to receive them.

The basic document that the delegation of Colombia has circulated for this debate contains a series of important proposals. In order to make an input in this thinking process, I would like to highlight some points which, it seems to us, could strengthen the role of the Council, without getting into the sectors that relate to other bodies of the United Nations.

First of all, the Council should be ready to enter into dialogue with regional and subregional agencies that are also involved in Council agenda issues and which have experience or initiatives in the area of small arms. We encourage the Council to continue the policy of strict implementation of arms embargoes in all sanctions regimes and to continue to provide incentives to all States to cooperate with the investigations of the sanctions committees.

It is also important to take into account measures to ensure that surplus weapons in a conflict that has just ended are not diverted to neighbouring countries or other regions where there is potential conflict. As to the Conference on illicit trade, the Council could send a positive signal by welcoming the adoption of the Programme of Action and reaffirming the commitment to contribute to the implementation of its provisions.

Lastly, at the first biennial meeting for the implementation of the Programme of Action, the Council might call on the Secretariat to provide information on the progress achieved in securing the objectives set in those paragraphs directed to the Council.

Solving the problem of small arms requires the commitment of all States, the assistance of civil society

and input from international, regional and subregional organizations. The Council alone cannot successfully tackle this challenge. But it is positive that this matter is being discussed and the views of States Members with respect to what they expect from the Council's activities are being listened to. We hope that this open debate will result in a substantive decision that will once again reaffirm the determination of the Council to work together with all concerned and contribute to collective efforts to eradicate the evils caused by small weapons.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Brazil for the kind words that he has addressed to Colombia.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Belgium. I invite to take a seat at the Council table and make his statement.

**Mr. De Ruyt** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — the associated countries of Cyprus, Malta and Turkey; and Iceland and Liechtenstein, European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries belonging to the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

I would first like to congratulate Colombia for assuming the presidency of the Security Council and to thank China and Ambassador Wang for his excellent service in the month of July. I would also like, in particular, to thank you, Mr. President, for having come from Bogota in order to preside over this open debate of the Security Council and thus give us the opportunity to express ourselves on a subject that is of particular concern to us and on which Colombian diplomacy and particularly Ambassador Reyes have devoted so much energy — namely, the illicit trade in small arms in all its aspects.

We can never repeat enough that there are more than 500 million light weapons and small arms currently in circulation around the world, and that in armed conflicts 8 out of 10 victims are civilians, many of them women and children. How can we ignore this scourge that fuels conflicts and seriously destabilises civil society? Public opinion expects us to take action. None of our countries can resolve this problem alone. That is why we need to act together.

At the start of the Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in July, the Belgian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister declared, on behalf of the European Union, that it was essential to be able to achieve concrete results in a number of what we consider to be priority areas: the implementation of export controls and export principles; the development of an international instrument on marking and tracing, as well as on brokering; specific actions concerning stockpile management and the destruction of surpluses; and a particular emphasis on disarmament, demobilisation and the reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants.

The European Union was not able to obtain at the Conference everything that it considered essential for effectively controlling illicit trafficking in small arms, in particular in areas having to do with export principles applied in the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as well as of the European Code of Conduct for Arms Exports and the European Union Joint Action on Small Arms and light weapons. The final text nevertheless contains important elements relating to marking, tracing, export controls, stockpile management, DDR and assistance for the world's most affected areas, mainly Africa.

Furthermore, we are very gratified by the decisions to organize in 2006, at the latest, a review conference to examine the implementation of the Programme of Action and to hold biennial meetings to evaluate the progress made at the regional, national and global levels that will ensure a follow-up to the Conference. In this context, I wish to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his remarks this morning, which clearly point the way for us. This follow-up is vital for ensuring that joint action against this illicit trafficking is effective in the long term.

Lastly, the follow-up opens the way for the preparation of negotiations concerning marking, tracing and brokering. This kind of initiative is of particular importance to the European Union, which has already begun important work along those lines.

The Programme of Action asserts that the illicit trade in light weapons prolongs conflicts and involves elements that touch on conflict prevention and settlement, as well as on development. The participating States have therefore decided to prevent, control and suppress all aspects of the illicit trade in light weapons, laying particular emphasis on regions of

the world where conflicts are ending and where there is an urgent need to resolve serious problems posed by the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of light weapons.

The Programme of Action also provides for the application of DDR programmes comprising measures for the collection and destruction of light weapons, in particular in post-conflict situations, and for the inclusion, whenever appropriate, of specific provisions for such programmes in peace agreements. At the regional level, there are also a number of measures aimed at strengthening moratoriums on the transfer and manufacture of light weapons and at support for DDR programmes, especially in post-conflict situations. Lastly, at the global level, the participating States have undertaken to encourage, particularly in post-conflict situations, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life.

In this regard, we have undertaken to encourage the Council to study, on a case-by-case basis, the possibility of including, if need be, relevant provisions concerning disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in the mandates and budgets for peacekeeping operations. The incorporation of these measures into a comprehensive strategy is, in our view, an effective and coherent way of supporting peacekeeping efforts and, above all, of guaranteeing their durability.

The European Union considers it essential that all the efforts made to convene the Conference be followed by concrete effects. The States that have to contend with post-conflict situations must be helped and supported by international decisions and measures taken in compliance with the Programme of Action.

As we have already said, none of our countries can resolve the problem of the illicit trade in light weapons and small arms alone. The European Union will therefore welcome with enthusiasm any initiative that will make it possible to enhance the follow-up to the Conference, as well as the implementation of the measures already taken and of those that will enable all the actors concerned to strengthen their capacity to combat this trade in an effective and lasting way.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Belgium for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Philippines. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

**Mr. Manalo** (Philippines): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We also congratulate China on its presidency last month. At the same time, I wish to congratulate you and your country on the leadership and initiative you have shown throughout the process leading to and during the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and for having convened this important meeting today.

Like your country, the Philippines has not escaped the problems that have been caused by the proliferation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons. In this regard, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his statement earlier this morning, in which he once again captured the true depth of this problem.

The international community took a step in the right direction in addressing this problem when, less than two weeks ago, we concluded our small arms Conference with the adoption of a Programme of Action. We must continue to move in the right direction and build on what we have achieved. The proliferation and the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons are and should be of direct concern to the Council. While the other organs, particularly the General Assembly, and agencies of the United Nations all have particular roles to play in addressing this problem, the Security Council has a unique and singular role, not only because the top producers of small arms and light weapons are members of the Council, but also because all have, in various forums, supported efforts to address this problem. Moreover, the Security Council's role is important primarily in two areas: arms embargoes and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants.

Illicit small arms transfers have become commonplace. New and old weapons move with unbelievable ease, but when United Nations arms embargoes are defied, that is when we see how truly insidious the activities of illicit arms brokers are. Thus, we find it most significant that the Programme of Action recalls the obligations of States to comply fully with Security Council arms embargoes. The

Programme of Action also contains the commitment of States to take appropriate measures at the national level against any activity that violates a Security Council arms embargo.

We strongly urge the Security Council to continue looking into ways and means of enhancing the effectiveness of arms embargoes, including reviewing the functioning of existing sanctions Committees and encouraging States to provide all relevant information on embargo violations.

While we understand the particular constraints involved, the Philippines strongly supports the call made by the Secretary-General and others two years ago, during the ministerial-level consideration of this issue in the Security Council, that measures for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants be included in peace agreements and the mandates of all United Nations peacekeeping operations.

We are particularly glad that the Programme of Action on small arms did not limit DDR to post-conflict situations. It is true that, as far as United Nations practice is concerned, the mindset is to apply DDR only to post-conflict situations, but there are far too many conflicts in which the United Nations is not involved and applying this rule to all conflicts is and would have been a grave error. If we are to wait until conflicts end, there may be no one left to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate.

We believe that even before conflicts cease, even before a conclusive military or political solution is reached, combatants should have a viable and practical opportunity to take themselves out of the conflict and for their small arms to be collected. The fact is that some combatants, given a choice, might prefer to do this, but that, in the absence of DDR, they may turn to crime, piracy, acts of terrorism or other similar activities. The Philippines therefore thanks those who supported our view and helped bring this progressive element into the Programme of Action.

We believe that our overall efforts to address the problem of small arms and the momentum that we have been building would receive a welcome boost if the Security Council were once again to place itself fully and squarely behind these efforts through a presidential statement or a resolution. This would give added political impetus to the follow-up action to the Conference and the Programme of Action.

Finally, the Philippines looks forward to working with the various organs and agencies of the United Nations, the relevant international and regional organizations, other States and members of civil society in implementing the Programme of Action, including preparing, as appropriate, for the various follow-up meetings to review its implementation.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of South Africa. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

**Mr. Kumalo** (South Africa): I welcome you to New York, Mr. President; it is good to see you here. You know, Sir, we in the Non-Aligned Movement used to be very envious of Colombia for its wonderful city of Cartagena, but now we are truly, truly envious of your having won the Copa América; we congratulate you and the people of Colombia.

South Africa is pleased that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects successfully adopted a realistic and implementable Programme of Action. In that regard, I wish to recall the statement made by the head of the South African delegation during the general debate at the Conference, when he said that

> "the Conference provides the international community with a unique opportunity to collectively express itself on the dangers posed by these weapons and to adopt a realistic and implementable programme of action. Such a collective effort would initiate a long-term process to prevent, combat and eradicate this threat to peace, stability and sustainable development".

In that regard, South Africa is satisfied that the Conference achieved its goals. While it must be recognized that the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference strikes a delicate balance of differing views, the Programme provides for the first time an internationally agreed framework for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects on the national, subregional, regional and global levels in a realistic, sustained and comprehensive manner.

The successful conclusion of the Conference, Mr. President, was possible thanks to the important role played by your Government, and in particular by

Ambassador Camilo Reyes in his capacity as President of the Conference. His leadership and contribution, as well as that of Ambassador Carlos dos Santos of Mozambique, the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, inspired the Conference to seek compromises and to adopt a realistic and achievable Programme of Action. Their dedication to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is symbolic of the plight of the peoples of States most affected by the scourge of those weapons.

South Africa is particularly pleased that the Programme of Action is based on the approach adopted by States most affected by the threat of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Africa collectively responded to that threat through the adoption of the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, thereby providing a framework for an African solution to a problem that transcends national and regional boundaries. In terms of that framework, the small arms problem is addressed from an inclusive perspective of arms control and disarmament, post-conflict peace-building, conflict prevention and socio-economic development. In addition, the Declaration concerning Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the adoption of a SADC draft protocol in August this year will facilitate subregional cooperation to combat illicit small arms proliferation; this is of particular relevance to the Programme of Action.

South Africa also welcomes the agreement that the General Assembly should convene a follow-up conference by no later than 2006 to review progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action. That conference and its preparatory phase, including meetings of States on a biennial basis, would consider national, regional and global implementation of the Programme of Action. It would also ensure that the process started by the United Nations Conference is sustainable and that it remains relevant. It would further ensure that the United Nations continues to play a central role in addressing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. In that regard, South Africa welcomes the various references in the Programme of Action to the role of the United Nations, other international organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society in assisting States to promote and implement the Programme of Action.

Although the important role of the Security Council in implementing the Programme of Action is recognized and welcomed, the nature and origin of the Programme of Action as an initiative of the General Assembly should be respected when the Council considers initiatives related to small arms. Given the nature of the problems associated with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the fact that the Programme of Action was developed and adopted through a process initiated by the General Assembly, this issue should continue to be dealt with in the ambit of the General Assembly. The Security Council's involvement in this issue should be confined to specific areas related to the Council's agenda.

In that regard, South Africa welcomes the commitment made by States in the Programme of Action to encourage, particularly in post-conflict situations, the disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants and their subsequent reintegration into civilian life, and to provide support for the effective disposition of collected small arms and light weapons. Of related importance is that one of the measures is to encourage the Council to consider, on a case-by-case basis, the inclusion of relevant provisions for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in the mandates and budgets of peacekeeping operations. South Africa furthermore welcomes the undertaking by States to take appropriate measures, including all legal or administrative means, against any activity that violates a Security Council arms embargo in accordance with the United Nations Charter and to cooperate with the United Nations system to ensure the effective implementation of Security Council embargoes.

South Africa recognizes the important interrelationship between the role of the Council in the implementation of Programme of Action and its responsibilities with regard to international peace and security issues. It is, however, regrettable that the Programme of Action, owing to the concerns of one State, does not include a commitment by all States not to provide arms to so-called non-State actors or rebel groups. The continued supply of arms, in particular small arms and light weapons, to rebel groups and other non-State actors clearly runs counter to efforts by the Council to promote peace and stability in specific areas of conflict. A commitment by all States to

provide arms only to Governments would, in our view, have strengthened the Council's efforts to prevent the supply of arms to rebel groups that continue to destabilize peace and security in many countries in Africa. In that regard, we remain concerned that rebel groups and other non-State actors continue to receive arms despite various initiatives by the Security Council. As that issue drives to the core of the problem associated with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in Africa, South Africa trusts that both the General Assembly and the Security Council will remain seized of this matter.

**The President** *(spoke in Spanish)*: I thank the representative of South Africa for his statement, and in particular for the congratulations he conveyed to Colombia about the Copa América success. I know that he celebrated Colombia's victory as though he was Colombian. Of course, other ambassadors were not quite as happy with the success of Colombia, but it was still generally celebrated. Once again, many thanks.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of New Zealand. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and make his statement.

**Mr. MacKay** (New Zealand): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on your initiative in the Council's role in relation to the issue of small arms and light weapons, particularly following the important achievement of the Programme of Action at the small arms Conference last month here in New York.

The Programme of Action underscored the multifaceted nature of the small arms issue and the real and immediate threat that these weapons pose to the security of nations and individuals. While the final outcome was not all that we might have hoped for, it is the first time the international community has agreed on measures to tackle the illicit trade in these weapons. At this stage, may I acknowledge the pivotal role that was played by Colombia, and in particular by Ambassador Reyes, in ensuring that the Conference had a successful outcome.

The Security Council's powers under Chapter VII of the Charter to take measures considered necessary to deal with threats to or breaches of the peace include, in appropriate circumstances, the imposition of arms embargoes to prevent the proliferation of small arms in a particular environment. We consider that, with careful thought, such measures can be helpful in achieving the core objective of restoring peace and security.

We recognize that it may be argued in some circumstances that imposing embargoes where the size of opposing arsenals is already skewed may do little more than freeze the existing balance of power. But, on the other hand, the Council's overriding concern should be to defuse the conflict situation as much as possible. The importation of more arms only adds fuel to the fire. It also might place additional lives at risk, including lives of personnel of operations mandated by the Council.

While the Council should continue to use these powers where necessary, it must also be sure that the effect of such measures will both halt the proliferation of small arms and make the prospect of an end to conflict more likely. The cooperation of all States is needed to ensure that domestic systems are in place to comply with such measures.

In our view, consideration should also be given to strengthening the capacity of the Secretariat so that it is able to provide further support for monitoring by the Council, to ensure that any embargo is not circumvented by illicit trade.

Recent conflicts in Sierra Leone and Angola have shown, however, that embargoes on weapons alone might often prove insufficient. In situations where conflicts are fuelled by the uncontrolled exploitation and smuggling of natural resources, measures should also be taken by the Security Council to address these factors. Further work must be undertaken on refining United Nations sanctions, including arms embargoes, so as to ensure that they are effectively targeted towards achieving sustainable peace with a greater certainty of success.

The Council also has an important role to play in ensuring that the widespread and uncontrolled presence of small arms and light weapons in areas of recent conflict does not disrupt nations' peace-building efforts. This requires the more frequent inclusion of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration elements in post-conflict United Nations peace-building operations, as recommended in last year's Brahimi report on United Nations peace operations. I note that a number of those who have spoken before me have also placed considerable emphasis on this aspect.

Recent experience in Sierra Leone and Kosovo has certainly shown that such measures are by no means easy, but they are absolutely essential. If stability is to be achieved, the law of the gun must not be allowed to reign freely. It is the role of the Security Council to recognize when such elements are required in missions and to include appropriate provisions in mission mandates.

We have seen this ourselves in our own region, the South Pacific, where small arms have exacerbated recent unrest and conflict. We have also seen it further afield in our peacekeeping and peace-building work with the United Nations. Countries of our region find external support to be vital as they try to resolve conflict. While the supporters come mainly from regional partners, the international community also has an important part to play, as the United Nations continues to do, for example, in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea.

Mr. President, we fully endorse your objective in seeking to formulate a set of practical and workable recommendations as an outcome of this meeting, and we look forward to the final product.

**The President** *(spoke in Spanish)*: I thank the representative of New Zealand for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of the Republic of Korea, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and make his statement.

**Mr. Sun Joun-yung** (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to express my warmest welcome and appreciation to you, Mr. Minister, for chairing this Security Council open debate on the issue of small arms. I would also like to pay tribute, through you, to Ambassador Camilo Reyes, who guided us to the successful conclusion of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

My delegation believes that the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference, spelling out concrete measures to be implemented at national, regional and global levels, provides a solid framework to monitor and review its implementation. At the same time, I would like to stress that the adoption of the Programme of Action is just the beginning of a long process to address this issue. Indeed, what lies ahead is a concerted effort to translate specific provisions contained in the Programme of Action into concrete action.

My delegation finds today's forum very timely and useful, not only because it will provide added momentum for our global efforts, but also because it will deepen the Security Council's understanding of its role in this field.

In recent years, there has been growing concern over the impact of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, as they claim innocent lives, exacerbate conflicts and impede post-conflict peace-building and rehabilitation. As the United Nations body bearing primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council should remain committed to finding a remedy to the problem of small arms and light weapons.

It has been nearly two years since the question of small arms was explicitly addressed in the Security Council. Recently Member States have highlighted the need to tackle the small-arms problem in the context of other Council open debates, most notably during this past June's debate on the prevention of armed conflict and April's debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflicts. We believe that the small arms question requires the continued attention and active engagement of the Security Council, and that the Council should be brought more fully into the fold of international efforts to address the issue.

I would like to take a moment to comment on a few of the points in the Programme of Action that I find particularly relevant to this debate.

I believe that the Security Council is well equipped to foster the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in conflict and post-conflict situations. Recalling that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons contributes not only to the outbreak of conflicts, but also to their recurrence, we cannot stress enough that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes are a core element of conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building efforts. At the United Nations Conference last month an overwhelming majority of States called for more substantive assistance from the international community for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. This call was based on the recognition that, if the deep-rooted reasons for the demand for small arms were not

addressed, it would be impossible to do away with the culture of violence.

As was made evident by recent events in Sierra Leone and Liberia, a lack of resources and political will for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts often leads to renewed violence in conflict-prone areas. It should be noted that the Programme of Action encourages the Security Council to consider, on a case-by-case basis, the inclusion of relevant provisions for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in the mandates and budgets of peacekeeping operations. This issue has particular relevance for the Security Council, as its peacekeeping missions have increasingly engaged in post-conflict reconstruction and even nation-building activities, where the collection and destruction of small arms and the rehabilitation of ex-combatants are critical not only for the success of the mission, but also for the sustainable peace and development of States concerned.

In addition, we recognize that the Security Council's arms embargoes can be powerful tools for curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We welcome the fact that the Programme of Action calls upon each and every State to take appropriate measures, including legal or administrative ones, against any activity that violates a Security Council embargo. However, we find it deeply disturbing that small arms and light weapons continue to be smuggled into areas where Security Council arms embargoes have been imposed. We recommend that the Security Council further study ways and means to improve the effectiveness of its arms embargoes.

We would also like to stress the particular importance of preventing the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in areas of actual and potential conflict. Certainly, a comprehensive approach to tackling the problems associated with these weapons will help minimize the incidence and intensity of violent conflicts and alleviate the suffering of innocent civilians. With this end in mind, the Security Council should strengthen its role in combating both the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and preventing their excessive and destabilizing accumulation.

Finally, we would like to encourage the Security Council to become involved in the follow-up to the Programme of Action. To this end we believe, as noted in the document prepared by Colombia for this open debate, that a follow-up report of the Secretary-General identifying, inter alia, areas in which the Security Council can play a more active role, would be of great value.

The Security Council has a valuable role to play in preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. As a strong advocate of curbing this illicit trade, my Government stands ready to support the Security Council's initiatives to facilitate the implementation of the Programme of Action.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of Venezuela. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

**Mr. Alcalay** (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by hailing the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Mr. Guillermo Fernández de Soto, who is presiding over this important meeting. At the same time, I wish every success to our colleague Alfonso Valdivieso, as, during this month of August, in which Colombia holds the presidency of the Council, he continues the marvellous job begun this morning by his Foreign Minister. We are certain, Sir, that the work of the Permanent Representative of Colombia as President of the Security Council this month will be a reflection of his estimable record as a diplomat at the United Nations and of Colombian diplomacy in general.

I would also like to salute the presence of the Secretary-General in our discussion this morning. This underscores the importance that the Secretariat attributes to the debate that is taking place in the Council today.

Although it is true that small arms and light weapons are not the causes of conflicts, ready access to them, combined with their widespread circulation and uncontrolled proliferation, has contributed to disturbances that affect communities around the world. The tremendous ease with which it is now possible to acquire these weapons on the international market, their indiscriminate spread in civilian populations and their use in violent activities and in crime — in addition to their use in terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking, as has been noted here on various occasions — make the problem even more disquieting. In order to illustrate the seriousness of this situation,

suffice it to mention that in the last decade 46 of the 49 conflicts that took place in various parts of the world were carried out chiefly by means of the use of small arms and light weapons. Millions of men and women around the world today mourn the loss of members of their families, and countries have lost outstanding professional people to help their development because of the harmful effects of these small arms and light weapons.

But at this stage, the debate, which is the second of its kind in this Council, is of particular importance because it was preceded by an important and successful meeting, the Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, under the brilliant leadership of Ambassador Camilo Reyes, to whom all previous speakers have paid tribute for his remarkable contribution to the negotiations on the Programme of Action. Thus, the Security Council faces a task that has already been developed in the General Assembly, and it must take further steps and become a compass for action, working to incorporate all the contributions that have already been made in order to make an effective and efficient contribution to what has already been done in the General Assembly, as a number of speakers have stressed.

The delegation of Venezuela takes the view that consideration of this issue by the Security Council is a significant challenge in this debate that the Organization has been holding on an issue of tangible current importance on the multilateral disarmament agenda, concerning which we need to pool our efforts to adopt a comprehensive approach that takes into account aspects such as arms control and disarmament, post-conflict peace-building, conflict prevention and social and economic development. This endeavour requires coordinated action involving a range of different bodies that are concerned with this issue so as to ensure this comprehensive approach.

The Security Council's role should certainly be oriented towards considering the implications of this problem within the purview of this principal organ, which is international peace and security. From this standpoint, it is our view that the Council has a specific interest in this issue, given its responsibility in peace-building, which in turn involves support for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, pursuant to the agreements voluntarily entered into by the parties. At the same time, the measures adopted by the Council in dealing with conflicts in various regions of the world have a genuine impact on efforts to reduce the spread and excessive accumulation of small arms through the implementation of arms embargoes, whose provisions, by the way, are binding on all States, and Venezuela complies with them in full.

The United Nations has given significant impetus to the development of a global awareness, which has enabled the first steps to be taken towards the creation and implementation of measures that, as they are phased in, could be an effective advance in controlling the illicit trafficking, excessive accumulation and uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In this endeavour, we should highlight the work of the various panels of governmental experts, which have been created to identify better within this Organization the means of tackling the problem in its true dimension. The recent Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons made it possible for us to secure a global political commitment by means of the adoption of the Programme of Action, whose aim is to prevent, combat and eliminate small arms and light weapons in search of a peaceful balance inside our countries, and which highlights the chief responsibility borne by States, the chief architects in carrying out these measures.

Venezuela considers that efforts to find solutions to the problem of the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons should follow a comprehensive, balanced and non-discriminatory approach that takes into account the specific characteristics and experiences of the regions, subregions and countries involved, with a view to tackling this criminal activity in all its aspects. At the same time, my country considers that with the support and participation of civil society, the primary responsibility for tackling these problems should fall to Governments. From this standpoint, there must be safeguards for the right of a State to acquire weapons to meet its legitimate needs of defence, in conformity with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, in order to prevent manipulation and biased interpretations.

In various regions of the world, States have taken specific measures to counteract the illicit proliferation of small arms. This is true in our hemisphere, where the Organization of American States broke new ground by adopting in November 1997 the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and

Other Related Materials, and with the preparation of model regulations on firearms, parts and components by the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission.

The commitment of Venezuela to international endeavours to combat illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is attested to by the adoption by the National Assembly, the legislative organ of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials, as published in the official bulletin of the Republic, issue number 37.217 of 12 June of this year.

Venezuela is convinced that the international community must base its efforts on cooperation in order to tackle the problem of small arms and their effects on peace and stability, in view of the links between them and other illicit activities that might also jeopardize the security of States.

Allow me to conclude by noting the result of the Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons. This outcome is the beginning of a process that will make it possible to achieve measures of greater depth and scale as we proceed further, in order to tackle the problem effectively and comprehensively. In this regard, we believe that the elimination of the excessive proliferation and accumulation of small arms, together with other measures proposed here, will undoubtedly contribute to the solution of the conflicts to which we have referred.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Venezuela for his kind words addressed to the delegation of Colombia.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Sudan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

**Mr. Erwa** (Sudan) *(spoke in Arabic)*: At the outset, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, which the Sudan has the honour of chairing this month, allow me to welcome you, Mr. Minister, as you preside over the Security Council during this month of August. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate your friendly country on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council this month. We are confident that this will represent yet another achievement in the list of Colombia's diplomatic successes.

Allow us also to thank you, Sir, for your initiative to convene this important meeting and for having invited non-members of the Council to participate in this debate. I should like also to take this opportunity to thank the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China for the outstanding and wise manner in which he discharged his duties as President of the Security Council last month.

Today's meeting is being held in the wake of the recently concluded United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Your country, Mr. President, had the honour of presiding over the Conference, in the person of Ambassador Camilo Reyes. Ambassador Reyes played a central role in the process and deployed major concrete efforts, throughout difficult negotiations, to reach a consensus on the text of the Programme of Action to prohibit the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

The Programme of Action, through various measures – national, regional and international – and review mechanisms, has given the international community a firm foundation for undertaking serious efforts to combat the threat posed by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

The implementation of the Programme of Action will require intensive efforts by Member States, the United Nations and relevant and international regional organizations in order to undertake constructive initiatives in implementation of the Programme's objectives.

The Group of Arab States contributed to the success of the Conference through many positive proposals that promoted the possibility of, and enhanced efforts to reach, a consensus. The Arab Group, in this context, wishes again to express its regret at the fact that the Programme of Action does not contain a clear commitment by Member States to export weapons only to Governments. That call was made by all African States, in the light of the fact that Africa is the continent most affected by the threat of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the hands of rebel groups, thereby threatening peace and security in the continent. The importance of this commitment can be clearly seen in the many conflicts that the Security Council deals with on an almost daily basis, in which these criminal groups work to undermine security in the African continent.

Many of the statements made during the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects stressed that this illicit trade was not a defining element of the nature of the many emerging conflicts in many parts of the world. However, such traffic does fuel existing wars. Conflicts have their roots in the remnants of colonialism; in economic, social and human conditions; in ethnic strife; in the proliferation of poverty, debt, illiteracy and infectious diseases in developing countries, in particular the least developed countries; in the glaring inequities in international, trade, and economic relations between developed and developing countries; and in situations of occupation, which lead to political strife followed by military action.

The Arab Group believes, therefore, that all efforts must be focused on dealing with these root causes in order to put an end to the human suffering caused by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The Arab Group believes that issues relating to disarmament fall within the mandate of the First Committee of the General Assembly. That Committee has adopted many resolutions on these questions. Our Group believes that the role of the Security Council must be a supporting one in respect of the efforts undertaken by the General Assembly. We also hope that the Security Council will fulfil its role in coordinating with relevant bodies to mobilize resources and expertise in order to implement the Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, as well as provide assistance to States in implementing the Programme.

Nevertheless, our Group understands the Council's interest in the threat posed by small arms and light weapons, in the light of its role and responsibility, as enshrined in the Charter, for the maintenance of international peace and security, and considering also the interlinkage between the proliferation of these small arms and light weapons in the conflict zones that the Council deals with.

All of these challenges are underlined in the Programme of Action, which also encourages the Security Council to consider the inclusion, on a case-by-case basis, of appropriate measures relating to disarmament, demobilization, resettlement and reintegration in the mandates of peacekeeping operations.

The Arab Group hopes that any measures taken by the Security Council in future on the subject of small arms and light weapons will be in line with the provisions of the Programme of Action. We hope that the Security Council will give due consideration to the fundamental right of States to self-defence, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter, which implicitly gives States the right to acquire weapons to defend themselves and to establish their own defence systems.

The Security Council is also called upon to respect the right to self-determination of peoples under colonialism or other forms of foreign domination or occupation. We express the hope that the Council will strictly abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including the sovereign equality of all States, their territorial integrity, the need to resolve disputes by peaceful means and non-intervention in the affairs of other States.

The Programme of Action stresses that efforts pertaining to small arms and light weapons must not encroach on priorities related to nuclear disarmament and to those pertaining to weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons.

In this regard, the Arab Group hopes that the Security Council will give due consideration to nuclear disarmament and to weapons of mass destruction, which are a genuine threat to humankind and are closely linked to international and regional peace and security. These priorities are set forth in the final declaration of the 1978 General Assembly special session devoted to disarmament, which stressed that utmost priority be given to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and then to conventional weapons.

The threat of such weapons is clearly seen in the grave situation in the Middle East, where Israel possesses weapons of mass destruction. The world witnesses daily the excessive use of military force by the Israeli occupation forces against an unarmed Palestinian people struggling for its right to self-determination.

In conclusion, the Group of Arab States pledges to continue its efforts and contributions to combat the threat of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, in the United Nations and in all other relevant international and regional organizations, and to support the review conference in 2006 and other

meetings devoted to reviewing the progress made nationally, regionally and internationally in implementing the Programme of Action.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

**Mr. Bebars** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, let me say that it is a great honour, on behalf of the Arab Republic of Egypt, to extend to your country and to you personally, Sir, our sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would like also to take this opportunity to convey to the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China our profound thanks for the efforts made during China's presidency of the Security Council last month. We would like also to emphasize the importance that we attach to the inclusion of the issue of small arms and light weapons on the agenda of the Security Council following the recent United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We wish also to extend our thanks to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the statement he made at the beginning of this meeting. We would like also to point out the objectives that we hope to achieve in today's meeting, which are contained in your letter, Mr. President, addressed to the previous President of the Security Council.

Egypt would like to associate itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Arab Group. Egypt considers illicit trafficking in small arms to be one of the most important problems affecting specific regions of the world. Because of the illicit and speedy proliferation of small weapons and its links with many ethnic, cultural, political and economic problems, this matter requires a solution that takes into account the specific conditions and circumstances in the affected areas. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons should be seen not as a cause of conflict, but rather as a tool for fomenting and fuelling ongoing conflicts, which find their root causes in a number of economic, social and ethnic factors that have accumulated and become complex.

To effectively put an end to this problem, we have to work through two parallel approaches. The first approach gives us a conception of the social and economic factors involved in this problem as the real root causes of the conflicts that lead to the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the long and medium terms. The second approach emphasizes confronting the problem of illicit trade and circulation of small arms and light weapons in the short term.

At the national level, Egypt has witnessed a period of stability in respect of small arms and light weapons. This stability is due to our strict legislation and regulations in this area, which go back to the 1950s. Our legislation controls all forms of trade, manufacture and possession of such weapons, criminalizes illegal activities and establishes national mechanisms to make laws and to implement them. At the regional level, Egypt is working in cooperation with its African neighbours through the exchange of experts and technical information in order to find definitive solutions to limit the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons on the African continent, which is the continent suffering most from armed conflicts.

The Bamako Declaration issued by the African ministerial meeting on small arms and light weapons, which was held in Mali in November 2000, is a pioneering regional initiative that reflects a joint African decision to work together against the illicit proliferation, circulation and trade of small arms and light weapons. During that meeting, in a spirit of cooperation, Egypt and its African brothers searched for a solution that takes into account the specific nature of this problem for some countries of the African continent.

At the international level, Egypt has actively and positively participated in the work of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, which produced an ambitious political Programme of Action aimed at combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and criminalizing other related illicit activities. It also aimed at safeguarding the control of national authorities over legal activities in order to prevent the use of such weapons in any illegal activities, at enhancing regional and international mechanisms to deal with the root causes of the problem of illicit trafficking and at limiting its adverse impacts in terms of poverty, the slow pace of social and economic development and ethnic conflicts in the affected countries.

In this connection, we would like to stress, absolutely and clearly, that dealing with this issue is linked to the non-infringement of a number of rights. Prominent among them is the right of peoples to self-determination and self-defence, particularly those peoples under the yoke of foreign occupation.

Moreover, the State has the right to carry out all legal activities in this area, to control its own territorial integrity, to monitor the small arms and light weapons it manufactures and to stipulate legislation to combat illicit trafficking in those weapons and to prevent their use and circulation in such illicit activities as terrorism and crime.

Addressing this issue in no way undermines the priorities of the international community in the field of disarmament, which are clearly defined in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978, in which nuclear disarmament enjoyed the highest priority, followed by other weapons of mass destruction and, finally, by conventional weapons.

Because of the exacerbation of the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the close relationship between the smuggling of these weapons and international peace and security, the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference clearly identifies the international community's sphere of activity, especially that of the Security Council. The Programme, in paragraph 38 of section II, encourages the Security Council

> "to consider, on a case-by-case basis, the inclusion, where applicable, of relevant provisions for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in the mandates and budgets of peacekeeping operations".

The Programme of Action also emphasizes in other areas the importance of the cooperation, commitment and total compliance of States with Security Council resolutions imposing arms embargoes in accordance with the United Nations Charter. Furthermore, it calls on all States to take all appropriate measures, including all legal and administrative means, against any activity violating a Security Council arms embargo.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the Programme of Action is considered to be the sole instrument for contending with problems related to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. It identifies in a comprehensive manner the priorities, commitments and national, regional and international standards in this area. If we adhere to the goals and measures set out in the Programme, we will reap the fruits of all the international community's efforts to combat the dangerous proliferation and trade in small arms and light weapons.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of India. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

**Mr. Pal** (India): We thank Colombia for calling this open meeting on small arms and we are honoured that you, Sir, are presiding over it. As Ambassador Valdivieso's paper makes clear, the focus of this meeting is wider than that of the Conference last month on the illicit trade in small arms, but the larger problems the Council will consider grow from the same roots.

As the Council said in its presidential statement in September 1999,

> "the prevention of illicit trafficking is of immediate concern in the global search for ways and means to curb the wrongful use of small arms, including their use by terrorists". (*S/PRST/1999/28*)

Perhaps 1 per cent of the global stock of small arms is illicitly held, but that comes to 5 million weapons. Conflict diamonds constitute a similar tiny fraction of the global trade in roughs, but the international community is trying to put in place a stringent, verifiable system of controls to make illicit trade much more difficult. The Council has given that process its support; indeed, the international effort to identify and ban conflict diamonds started here, and proscribing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons must have at least as high a priority.

Like any other commodity, the trade in small arms is licit only if both exports and imports go through official, legal channels. Arms exports by a Government that violate none of its laws are nevertheless illicit if the weapons are sent to non-state actors in another country, bypassing or subverting laws there. Since terrorists and non-state actors exploit this loophole, buying arms on the international market when they are not covertly or illegally supplied by

States that promote terrorism, the international community must agree — as it was unable to do at the Conference last month — that the trade in arms must, as the rest of international trade does, flow only through channels authorized by both exporting and importing Governments.

Members of this Council, given its role in the maintenance of international peace and security, obviously have a special responsibility, and none more so than the permanent members, both because they are the largest arms exporters in the world and because, if they break the law, they can use the veto to protect themselves.

Over the last decade, the Council has established embargoes to cut off the supply of arms to such violent non-state actors as UNITA, the Revolutionary United Front and the Taliban. When the Council found that these were easily bypassed, investigations it authorized showed how international criminal networks were being used to sell diamonds and supply arms in Angola and Sierra Leone. In Afghanistan, the principal exports of the Taliban are drugs and terrorism, and the arms embargo is as riddled with holes as the latticework for which one of its neighbours is famous. We hope that the monitoring mechanism that the Council set up for Afghanistan a few days ago will do its work well. If the arms embargo is still flouted, we expect the Council, as it has in West Africa, to tackle the problem at its roots and to take measures against those responsible.

Elsewhere, as the United Nations tries to help build peace after a conflict, disarmament is often the first and knottiest challenge its peacekeepers face. Your working paper, Mr. President, asks what happens to the small arms collected in a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration campaign. They must be destroyed, but that is often the problem easiest to resolve. Many of those who fight in these internecine conflicts have grown up with arms; in the world they know, a gun is the only means, they think, of staying alive. It protects them and they use it to force others to give them food and shelter. Unless the United Nations offers them security and they have other means of livelihood, most do not give up their arms or give up only a few of them. This means that the United Nations must send its peacekeepers so well-armed and equipped that they can truly offer security to all sections of the local population and face down those who refuse to give up their arms. It also means that the international community must be generous with its support for the economic programmes of rehabilitation. Without this, combatants could be driven, by the fear of destitution if nothing else, to keep their arms.

Over the past 50 years, small arms have become enormously more lethal, the average assault rifle now laying down the volume of fire of early machine guns. They have also become lighter, which means that children can use them much more easily. Much less training is needed with weapons that simply spray bullets over a wide range, and the cost of small arms has plummeted from the 1980s, as some armies have laid off stocks.

All this explains why small arms in the hands of ever-younger combatants have been able to sustain conflicts hugely expensive in terms of lives lost, and why terrorists have been able to take such a heavy toll of innocent lives.

Now, however, small arms are about to make another jump in technology. Some armies are receiving for field trials small arms that integrate integrated-circuit and other cutting-edge technologies into an assault rifle, making them infinitely more destructive. If the past is a guide, these weapons will turn up in the hands of non-State actors well before most third-world armies get them. These are the weapons that soldiers from developing countries will have to face in the hands of terrorists or insurgents at home or, when they go out as Blue Helmets, abroad.

It is more than ever necessary, therefore, to have the strictest controls put in place on the manufacture and export of small arms. International instruments need to be negotiated quickly, and a system or mechanism needs to be put in place to trace and mark small arms and to ensure that they are not diverted from legal channels into the illicit trade. The Council should give its encouragement to that process.

Both the Conference on the illicit trade in small arms and the paper prepared by Colombia (*S/2001/732, annex*) recognize the usefulness of regional cooperation. However, as with narcotic drugs, with which illicit small arms and terrorism have a nexus, countries or regions into which these are smuggled can only do so much to stop the influx. In the case of narcotic drugs, the onus is placed on producing regions to control the problem at the source. The cooperation of the countries and regions that are the principal manufacturers and exporters of arms is just as essential to the control of this other illicit trade. Some of them

have taken steps regionally to stop the illicit trade in weapons; we welcome that.

We trust that the Security Council will take effective practical steps carrying forward, or in support of, the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference last month that will curb the availability and use of small arms to foment and sustain conflict and terrorism.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of India for the kind words he addressed to my country.

The next speaker is the representative of Australia. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

**Ms. Moules** (Australia): Australia welcomes Colombia's initiative in convening this open debate. We consider it timely for the Security Council to have further discussion of the question of small arms two years after the item was first placed on the Council's agenda and in the wake of the successful outcome of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all Its Aspects.

The Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference provides a solid framework for enhanced international cooperation in combating the illicit small arms trade. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the President of the Conference, Colombia's Ambassador Camilo Reyes, on his outstanding leadership and on his pivotal role in forging the consensus that was achieved. Australia's expectation is that the Programme of Action will serve as a practical and dynamic point of reference for further work at the national, regional and international levels, including in relation to the Security Council's role in this area.

We see continuing validity in the presidential statement (*S/PRST/1999/28*) issued following the Security Council's open debate on small arms in September 1999, in particular in relation to: the importance of regional cooperation in tackling the issue of illicit trafficking in small arms; the call for greater attention to be given to effective implementation of arms embargoes; the call for measures to discourage arms flows to countries or regions engaged in or emerging from armed conflict; the provision to peace negotiators of best-practice guidance on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants; the need for effective national regulations and controls on small arms transfers; and the importance of ecologically safe destruction methods, in respect of which we welcome the Secretary-General's report of November 2000 (*S/2000/1092*).

Beyond the enduring importance of the 1999 presidential statement, several aspects of the recently adopted Programme of Action on small arms have particular relevance for the Security Council, namely: the need to place particular emphasis on regions of the world where conflicts come to an end and where serious problems with the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons have to be dealt with urgently, and the importance of mobilizing the political will throughout the international community to prevent and combat illicit transfer and manufacturing of small arms and light weapons.

In addition, some of the more specific measures recommended in the Programme of Action complement the 1999 presidential statement. These include the call for cooperation with the United Nations system to ensure effective implementation of arms embargoes decided by the Security Council, and the call for consideration by the Security Council, on a case-by-case basis, of the inclusion, where applicable, of provisions for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in the mandates and budgets of peacekeeping operations. In that context we would emphasize also the importance of the safe and timely disposal of surplus arms and of the secure management of existing small arms stockpiles.

Since the start of international efforts to address small arms problems, Australia has been a strong advocate of developing practical, implementable measures tailored to meet the specific needs and capacities of each situation and region in which the problems occur. For example, Australia has strongly supported the development of model legislation on weapons control for Pacific island countries and is examining ways of improving procedures for effective weapons safekeeping and accountancy in that region. Ongoing efforts at the regional level provide a guide to practical activities that can help to reduce the threat to civilians and their livelihoods that can be posed by the availability and circulation of small arms.

We see an important role for the Security Council in ensuring that small arms issues are addressed as an integral element of the Council's approach to conflict prevention and resolution. Depending on the particular circumstances of each situation, the Council is well placed to develop practical recommendations for addressing small arms issues, drawing on lessons learned to date and on the Programme of Action where applicable.

We welcome the fact that small arms issues have been increasingly referred to in many of the Council's thematic debates over the past two years. We welcome also the Security Council's endorsement of the Secretary-General's reporting on various missions, including those which cover small arms issues, for example in relation to weapons disposal in Bougainville. This provides further ballast for international efforts to combat small arms problems.

We urge the Security Council to continue its active efforts to address small arms issues, with particular reference to the spirit and objectives of the Programme of Action.

For its part, Australia will continue to work assiduously for effective implementation of the Programme of Action, in particular in our own region, as part of our global cooperative efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and to alleviate the threat it poses to international peace, security and development.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Australia for the kind words she addressed to my delegation.

The next speaker is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

**Mr. Ahmad** (Pakistan): Mr. President, I would like to begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. Your presence here underscores the important role that Colombia has been playing in leading the international effort to meet the challenge of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Your initiative in arranging today's debate is timely, as this meeting takes place against the backdrop of the recently concluded United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. I must mention here that we had an opportunity to work very closely with your delegation before and during the Conference, and I can assure you that we will work very closely with your delegation even as we pursue its follow-up.

The Conference adopted a Programme of Action which clearly identifies the responsibilities of States at the national, regional and global levels. The contents of the Programme of Action are now being analysed and examined by Member States for the requisite follow-up measures on their part.

We welcome this opportunity which you have provided us, Mr. President, by convening today's meeting to examine how the Security Council can play its role in addressing the problem of small arms.

First of all, I must compliment you, Mr. President, for encapsulating nearly 40 statements in today's meeting. We appreciate your patience. In contrast, nearly 150 statements were made during the three or four days of general debate in the Conference. All these statements should give us enough food for thought and soul searching, certainly not ammunition to create smoke screens to cover the realities.

Undoubtedly, the easy availability of small arms and light weapons has exacerbated the situation in many trouble spots around the world. The abundance of small arms in conflict situations has also made United Nations peacekeeping efforts more difficult and hazardous. Indeed, disarmament of warring factions is increasingly becoming a linchpin of peacekeeping operations. Pakistan, as a major participant in United Nations peacekeeping efforts, is playing its part in implementing such programmes in conflict areas, particularly, if I may mention, in Sierra Leone.

While disarmament programmes and restrictions on the flow of illicit arms help to address the problem, they are not the real and definitive solution. Conflicts attract arms, whether legal or illegal. For every demand, there is a commensurate supply — and this is applicable to every commodity, including arms. Arms will continue to find their way to wherever conflicts exist. The flow of arms, illicit or otherwise, cannot be completely stemmed. What can be controlled, however, or resolved or even prevented, is not the flow of arms, but the conflicts themselves. That is where the role of the Security Council lies, and where the primary responsibility of the Council lies. Let there be no detraction from the Charter obligations which this body has towards the pacific settlement of disputes and the

prevention of armed conflicts. As the old adage goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Mr. President, you have raised some valid points in your letter of 25 July which was circulated as a document of the Security Council. We agree that the accumulation and circulation of and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons pose a global threat to peace and security. Addressing this issue, however, is the responsibility of Member States in accordance with the provisions of the Programme of Action adopted by the recent Conference. The Security Council, for its part, must play its role as a facilitator of that process by focusing on its own Charter obligations. The Council's concern should not be so much with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons as with conflict prevention and dispute resolution. The Council must not allow a situation to arise in the first place that entails the use of arms, small or big, or their proliferation.

In fact, somebody once asked Einstein, if I may recall, what weapons would be used in a third world war. He said that he did not know what would be used in a third world war, but he knew that only rocks and stones would be used in the fourth world war. So, whatever it may be, even rocks can become a means to kill each other. Therefore, the best thing is to prevent the situations that necessitate men killing each other. That is the imperative.

It is not the ready availability of small arms alone which contributes to the intensification of armed conflicts and to increased levels of violence. A culture of peace cannot be created simply by eradicating small arms and light weapons. The problem is not so much the weapons; it is the conflicts themselves. As long as armed conflicts continue to afflict our planet, the means of violence will always be available. Trying to deal with the means of violence is merely to put on a bandage rather than going into the malaise and treating the disease.

In many cases, violence is generated by denial of justice, and conflicts intensify because of the denial of the inalienable right of self-determination and the continuation of foreign occupation. It is this and not the easy access to small arms which is an impediment to negotiations and the realization of lasting peace. Nobody can deny legitimacy to freedom struggles wherever they are waged and with whatever means they are waged. People do and will fight back when their homeland is occupied and when their intrinsic rights are trampled. The examples of Kashmir and Palestine are clear for all to see. The Council's obligations in such cases are clear: to implement its own resolutions and to take the necessary steps to resolve disputes and restore peace, particularly by implementing its own resolutions and decisions. There can be no deviation from this basic requirement.

We fully share your view, Mr. President, that the initiatives taken to address the problem of small arms lie outside the competence of the Security Council. You have clearly defined the parameters of today's meeting by acknowledging that this public debate is not meant to establish new definitions or understandings on the question of small arms, nor is it to introduce new norms and codes of conduct. This is a subject on which efforts at the global, regional, subregional and national levels are already in progress.

In our view, the first objective stipulated in your document, which is follow-up action by the Council on the question of small arms, can begin to be addressed through decisive actions by the Council on conflict prevention. The Council can also address the second objective by its fulfilling its obligation to resolve disputes in all conflicts, without exception or selectivity. Chapter VI of the Charter provides the framework.

The Security Council is obliged not only to keep peace, but also to make peace, to build peace. The third objective, regarding the active participation of States, has already been addressed at length in the recent Conference. Member States are fully cognizant of their responsibilities, and any further debate on this issue will not add anything of value. In this regard, the elements identified in your document as issues for consideration therefore also become somewhat redundant. What remains here, however, is the need to underscore the Security Council's Charter obligations.

We believe that the best contribution the Council could make would be to fulfil its Charter obligations on preventing armed conflicts and resolving disputes. The only answer to all the questions raised in your document is for this world body to eliminate the root causes of conflicts, resolve disputes, make and build peace. In addition, necessary concerted action has to be taken to promote sustainable development and economic well-being in all parts of the world. Peace and development are inextricably linked.

The Security Council's mandate is clearly defined. While there may be an urge in the Council to expand its role in all directions, it must not lose sight of its basic functions and obligations. Trying to take on tasks beyond the Council's mandate may be an ambitious exercise; it is also self-defeating. There is a wise ancient saying that he who tries to do everything ends up doing nothing.

That is why the Council must not lose sight of, nor indeed its focus on, its Charter obligations and must try to fulfil them completely and without selectivity. If the Council wants to make a genuine contribution to the question of small arms, then it must focus on the areas that are directly within its competence and jurisdiction. These are, I repeat at the risk of repetition, the peaceful resolution of disputes and the prevention of armed conflicts. We need a resolute but non-discriminatory approach rather than mere rhetoric through public debates.

Pakistan is fully cognizant of its obligations under the Programme of Action adopted by the recent Small Arms Conference. All Member States are conscious of their responsibilities. The question is whether the Security Council is willing and able to play its role in accordance with its obligations, as enshrined in the Charter. This is where the effectiveness and the credibility of the Council, and that of the United Nations, will be tested. The only way for the Council to tackle the issue of the supply of small arms is to end the demand for them by preventing conflicts and resolving disputes. The Council will, therefore, do justice to itself and indeed to the international community by focusing on its Charter obligations and fulfilling them completely and without selectivity or discrimination.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of Canada. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and make his statement.

**Mr. Heinbecker** (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I welcome you, Sir, and we congratulate Ambassador Reyes of Colombia, who was able to organize this meeting with competence and patience.

Canada is pleased with the results of the Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Conference concluded with the adoption of a Programme of Action that showed the international community's determination to tackle the problem of small arms trafficking. This success is based on solid foundations, in particular on the specific, future-oriented action of the African States, the member States of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the countries of Latin American and the Caribbean.

(*spoke in English*)

We now have a consensus document that acknowledges that the small arms trade as a whole, and not just the illicit aspects of that trade, poses real and urgent problems. We have all agreed that Governments are responsible for acting on such issues as manufacturing, marking and tracing, record-keeping, export controls, brokering, stockpile management and the collection and destruction of small arms.

The Programme of Action that we have agreed to also recognizes the human dimension of the problems linked to small arms, including their impacts on women and children — aspects of the issue in which my country has invested particular time and effort. Another positive aspect for Canada is the Programme's attention to the issues of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, issues that others before me have highlighted today.

The results of the Conference are thus very welcome, but they are only a first step. In achieving a consensus result some important elements had to be left aside for the moment. The Programme of Action is a good start, but it is neither perfect nor complete. It includes no elements, for example, on such key factors as regulation of civilian possession of arms, or transfers to non-State actors. Action on these elements, too, was supported by many delegations, but unacceptable to only one.

The Programme of Action also includes little in the way of detail on such key issues as criteria to help Governments clarify the conditions for export authorization or standards for determining what constitutes an excessive and destabilizing accumulation or surplus. These are important elements for Canada, but problematic for some other countries. All these unfulfilled elements are key to any comprehensive international approach to the small arms issue and must still be re-addressed. The issues that could not be agreed on in the Conference can and must be actively pursued and re-addressed in the biannual meetings and the review process.

More broadly, the Programme will be stillborn even in its current form if it is not rigorously and rapidly implemented. Some of these issues can be handled through the follow-up procedures of the Programme itself. The issues on which there was agreement, both those explicitly mentioned in the follow-up section of the Programme and those mentioned elsewhere in the document, should be pursued vigorously in the meantime, starting now.

For our part, in Canada, we have already begun planning and consultations with other States on regional implementation seminars. We will be pushing for implementation not just at the national level but also through all pertinent regional and international organizations of which we are members — and that is most of them. This includes the Security Council, which can play a key role, for example, by incorporating appropriate disarmament, demobilization and reintegration provisions in the mandate of peacekeeping operations and in securing the necessary financing for those provisions.

The Conference was undoubtedly a success, but still only a qualified success. It would be a mistake to underestimate what we did achieve. Equally, it would be wrong not to recognize how far we still have to go. We owe it to the men and women and girls and boys in places much less comfortable than New York City. Their well-being and security depends on our controlling — indeed, on our curtailing — the appalling trade in small arms. We do not believe there is any country among us blind or indifferent to the terrible consequences for these people if we fail. But it has become apparent in negotiations that there are still some philosophical differences of approach on the issue of small arms. In Canada's view, and in the view of many of the countries most severely affected by the instability and insecurity these weapons bring, the access, the management, the sale, the transfer and the use of these weapons must be closely tracked and closely controlled, whether they are in the legal or illegal cycle of transfer. We should know into whose hands these weapons are being sold or given and by whose hands they are being used at all times — in peace, in conflict, but particularly in turbulent times. No philosophy or ideology gives any of us a dispensation from seeing the terrible harm that these weapons do, and no philosophy or ideology gives anyone an exemption from the responsibility to address them. Just because the issues of transfer and possession are not reflected in our document does not mean they are not reflected in the daily lives of so many people — lives that are themselves too often curtailed because of these weapons.

The real assessment of the Conference's success will be made on the ground, not in New York, in terms of guns destroyed and lives saved. This in turn will mean some very hard work, nonetheless, for us here in New York, in converting the paper promises of the Programme of Action into reality. It will mean devoting time, money and political will to this issue, and it will mean continuing the battle over the coming years to complete the Programme of Action to make it more comprehensive in its scope and more ambitious in its commitments. The Council may rest assured that Canada will continue with these battles, working closely with like-minded States from all regions of the world until this scourge is alleviated. In that regard, we support the Secretary-General's call for a legally binding treaty.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Nepal. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

**Mr. Sharma** (Nepal): Let me begin by congratulating our close friend, Colombia, on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. We are honoured by your presence here, Mr. Minister, at today's open debate on small arms, which signifies the importance we should attach to the issue before us. I appreciate the background paper prepared by the Colombian mission, which is focused and useful.

The debate on small arms could not have been more timely. Only last month, we agreed on a global Programme of Action to combat illicit trade in small arms in a concerted manner. This debate sustains the impetus generated by the Conference.

Much has been said in recent years about the horrors of small arms as the principal instruments of violence. It is time we joined hands to bring about the dawn of a new era where the glory of life prevails over the glory of guns.

The menace of guns has shown its ugly face in schools, on streets and in civil wars in different parts of the world. Out of more than 500 million small arms in circulation, a sizeable number are in the hands of non-

State actors. If our own recent experience is any guide, once violence has broken out, the distinction between legal and illegal civilian possession of small arms loses much of its meaning. They simply remain the horrendous tools of death.

The impact of small arms has been deep and wide: rapes, broken families, traumatized lives, violated human rights, overstretched health services, undermined education, misused scarce resources, impeded development, destabilized States, undermined peace, maimed youths and colossal loss of lives. The majority of victims have been innocent and defenceless women and children. Most unconscionable is the growing number of child soldiers, whom people of unscrupulous ambition or greed harness to kill and be killed.

Small arms are indeed as much a security challenge as they are a development problem. Parochial political interests, criminal motives and social discontent fuel the proliferation of small weapons, making them likely to be indiscriminately used.

Humanity ought to strive for durable peace and security for everyone in the world. To achieve this, we must pursue the peaceful resolution of conflicts as well as disarmament and security at a lower level of armament, stimulate development that is also environmentally sustainable, and promote justice that gives each of us equal opportunity to excel.

There has been considerable progress in controlling, and in some cases outlawing, weapons of mass destruction, and we need to further strengthen and accelerate the process. The international community, however, has just broken the ground of disarmament in small arms and light weapons, and we have yet to devise a coherent and effective global strategy to prevent the flow of small arms into conflict-prone zones, to reduce our reliance on them for our safety, and to evolve a culture of peace. The United Nations, as in the case of weapons of mass destruction, can play a significant role in this endeavour, too.

Clearly, the global accord on small arms is just a modest, but good, beginning. We still have to confront the challenge of implementing the agreement, and, more importantly, of moving beyond it to address the remaining issues, in order to make the world safer for all from the scourge of small arms.

The United Nations has a threefold obligation to confront the problem of small arms. First, it must work with other stakeholders to implement the recently agreed Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms. Secondly, in conflict situations, it must join forces with Governments to impose and enforce arms embargoes, to check illegal local production and to prevent legitimately owned weapons from getting into the wrong hands. Thirdly, it must encourage the international community to remove the threat of small arms from the face of the earth by taking additional measures.

Nepal appreciates the fact that the United Nations has already devised an effective approach to demobilizing, disarming and reintegrating combatants in post-conflict situations. This approach must be further refined and incorporated, where appropriate, in Security Council mandates to make peace sustainable. The United Nations must help evolve a workable global strategy to prevent the proliferation of small arms through, inter alia, marking and tracking measures.

Information, as we all recognize, is of critical importance to shaping a prudent policy and executing it effectively. No source of information could match the keen observations of United Nations development and humanitarian workers, who can keep an eye on smouldering social discontent and its facets, or of Blue Helmets manning United Nations observer and peacekeeping missions. Of late, civil society has emerged as a strong partner of this world body and a rich and additional source of information for United Nations agencies and processes.

High-level panels could be helpful if they focused on reinforcing and furthering international consensus, rather than sidetracking or eroding it. Occasional United Nations fact-finding and advisory missions could also be explored as additional sources of information, based on need rather than as a matter of course. These could also prove counterproductive if overused, because of their inherent visibility, in cases where a quieter track 2 approach is critical to striking a deal to resolve an involved inter-State or intra-State conflict.

There is tremendous potential yet to be tapped in regional and subregional organizations, whose physical and cultural proximity can help tremendously to accurately identify and analyse the problem, to forge

workable solutions, and to devise effective follow-up measures. The United Nations must take them on board in a more meaningful fashion to optimize the benefits they offer.

The Secretary-General's report must be the linchpin of institutional information, both generic and specific, for the Security Council to act. The Council should therefore request him to furnish as comprehensive a report as possible, including information on the existence of small arms, sources of supply and their possible impact on United Nations peacekeeping missions, so that the Council could formulate its mandates in an informed and appropriate manner. But we must not lose sight of the fact that he often has to work under severe resource and time constraints and that parties in conflict seldom share sensitive information, thereby limiting his capacity to produce the kind of report the Security Council would like to see on its desk. If objectively considered, the lessons learned from past experience could provide additional and invaluable insight to the Council.

Having said this, I must confess that Nepal is not in favour of reinventing the wheel. We must try to make the best use of the available resources and mechanisms in a more coordinated and effective manner in order to achieve our goals.

To be sure, an immediate symptomatic treatment of the malady associated with small arms is essential. But a lasting peace will remain a pipe dream until we tackle the root causes of social discontent: poverty, lack of opportunity and injustice.

Often, poor, frustrated and unemployed youth seeking jobs and a station in life succumb to the glory of guns and fall prey to the self-serving designs of thugs, criminals and myopic political leaders. We must empower the young with education, skills and jobs so that they can say no to guns.

This calls for reversing the vicious circle of poverty and conflict, making democracy work for people, defeating crime, accelerating sustainable development, creating employment opportunities, and opening schools and hospitals in poor countries.

We must give our youth hope and opportunity. The international community must come forward to make this happen by assisting the poor countries to develop and by making technology and markets work for the poor.

In essence, it will take social transformation to wipe out the menace of small arms. The Security Council, cooperating with other competent stakeholders, must contribute to this transformation to the best of its capacity.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Nepal for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Costa Rica. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

**Mr. Niehaus** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Mr. Minister, and, through you, the sister Republic of Colombia on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. Costa Rica appreciates the leadership that your delegation has shown under the skilful guidance of Ambassador Valdivieso in this body, while at the same time recognizing your great endeavours in promoting the interests and positions of Latin American countries.

The presence of small arms is a catalyst in armed conflict. It is quite evident from every standpoint that such conflicts would be impossible without weapons. For this reason, it is not only right for the Security Council to consider this matter; it is indispensable for this body to take strong measures to prevent the threat posed by this kind of weaponry.

The spread of small arms stokes the fires of violence, heightens hatred and struggle, exacerbates crime and terrorism and favours political and social instability. The presence of light weapons facilitates and encourages violations of fundamental human rights. Arsenals of small weapons prolong armed conflicts and impede the peace processes. Their availability fuels common crime and feeds organized crime. Their indiscriminate sale enriches a few while ignoring the interests and needs of the majority. Military budgets voraciously consume meagre national resources, while our peoples suffer from the most abject poverty.

In the hands of national armies, small arms are a threat to international peace and security. In the hands of extremist groups or despotic regimes, light weapons become a threat to internal peace and security. In the hands of private individuals, such weapons lead to social breakdown and erode the security of our citizens. The Security Council cannot continue to

ignore the suffering caused by the 500 million existing small arms. This body cannot turn a deaf ear to the cries of millions of innocent victims.

Just two weeks ago, we saw in this city the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. Quite candidly, I must say, that as far as my delegation was concerned, the result of the Conference was discouraging.

We are dismayed that the Programme of Action adopted there does not explicitly prohibit the transfer of arms to rebel groups. We are indignant that the document does not condemn the dispatch of arms to governments that commit mass or systematic violations of human rights. We are alarmed that no strong measures have been adopted to regulate the possession of light weapons among civilians. We deplore the fact that there has been no agreement on the immediate preparation of a legally binding code of conduct on the transfer of arms. We are concerned that the Programme of Action does not include any explicit reference to human rights, which should constantly guide our struggle to combat this kind of weaponry. Moreover, we regret that these very grave shortcomings have been the result of inflexibility on the part of just a few delegations that around this table profess to defend peace and security.

The Security Council, fully and faithfully discharging its primary responsibility for international peace and security, must today take the lead in combating the spread of small arms.

First of all, with respect to all the disputes under its jurisdiction, the Council should adopt or strengthen embargoes designed to prevent, combat and eliminate the inflow of weapons. Such measures need to go hand in hand with effective verification machinery and with the full cooperation both of neighbouring countries and arms producers.

Secondly, the Council must condemn and prohibit the transfer of military material and personnel or financial and logistic support to those countries whose military units or security forces take part in human rights violations. We believe that that ban should also be extended to those States that do not respect democratic principles or that have not ratified the main human rights instruments and instruments of international humanitarian law. The same ban should apply to the transfer of arms to non-State actors, rebel groups and extremist movements.

Thirdly, the Security Council, with the assistance of the Secretary-General, should investigate and find illicit supply routes for small arms and light weapons to various areas in conflict and impose appropriate sanctions on the nations, entities or individuals involved in such activities. We believe that setting up panels of experts similar to those investigating the diamond trade would be a use model to follow.

At the same time, when circumstances in the field so warrant, it would be appropriate to include in the mandate of peacekeeping operations the task of monitoring implementation of arms embargoes and investigating breaches thereof. As part of their mandate, missions should, moreover, be capable of collecting, confiscating and destroying surplus small arms and of promoting the reconversion of the arms industry.

In the medium and long term, the quest for international peace and security requires a substantial reduction in the number of small arms available. Combating the use, misuse and spread of these weapons demands demilitarization in our societies and the creation of a genuine culture of peace and life grounded in greater economic and social equity, the rule of law, democracy, representative government and human rights.

In this context, the Security Council should support disarmament efforts while at the same promoting reduction in military expenditure. Would it perhaps not be better for the $191 billion that the developing countries currently squander on their armed forces to be devoted to health? Would it not be preferable to devote to education the $22 billion spent on arms transfers to the Third World? Would this perhaps not be the best way of guaranteeing peace for future generations?

For more than 50 years now, Costa Rica has had no arms expenditure. We are a disarmed country without an army, which devotes its public budget to education, preventive health and infrastructure investment. In our land, you will find schools, not barracks. Our children have never seen a helicopter gunship, an armoured car or a warship.

Our experience has taught us that peace is not simply the absence of armed conflict. Genuine peace is

the fruit of harmony among the various sectors of society, respectful relationships among peoples and individuals and the rejection of violence and hatred. Peace demands active brotherhood among all people. For this reason, peace can only exist when we recognize that as human beings we are members of the same family. The elimination of small arms is just a first step in that direction.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Costa Rica for his kind words addressed to my country.

The next speaker is the representative of Belarus, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and make his statement.

**Mr. Ling** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Republic of Belarus, too, welcomes Colombia's initiative to convene an open debate on small arms and light weapons in the Security Council.

The recently concluded United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was undoubtedly a landmark event in the life of the entire of international community. I should like to express our gratitude to the representative of Colombia, Ambassador Camilo Reyes, whose experience and diplomatic skills enabled the successful convening of the Conference and the adoption of the Programme of Action, which, it must be said, was no easy task. We must also refer to the highly professional and effective work of the President of the Preparatory Committee, Ambassador Carlos dos Santos.

In the view of the Republic of Belarus, the holding of an international Conference under United Nations auspices and the adoption there of a final document, the Programme of Action, represented a great achievement. For the first time, discussing the problems surrounding the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons was no longer a matter of mere national or regional interest, but assumed a global dimension that drew the attention of the wider world community to this very serious issue. The next stage must be concrete steps on the part of Member States, international and regional organizations, the United Nations and the Security Council to implement the Programme of Action in order to solve the current difficult problems in this area.

The Republic of Belarus shares the concern expressed by the majority of the members of the world community, who regard the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons as one of the main factors in the spread of international terrorism, the emergence and perpetuation of local armed conflicts and the expansion of violence.

Belarus also fully shares the fears that the illicit spread and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons pose a real threat to regional and international peace and security. The adoption at the Conference of an agreed Programme of Action and the subsequent discussion of that topic today here in the Security Council are very convincing manifestations of the international community's awareness of the fact that the problem of small arms and light weapons cannot be solved by individual countries, but require agreed and coordinated efforts at the national, regional and international levels.

My country is committed to the principles of eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition and is actively contributing to the fight against that scourge. Relevant information on national legislation and practical steps adopted by the Government of Belarus to combat the illicit trade in these weapons were contained in the statement made by the head of the official delegation of the Republic during the high-level segment of the Conference and have been distributed to members.

We are convinced that the Security Council can play an important role in solving the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons by giving closer scrutiny to the following aspects of the problem: first, reacting in a timely fashion to facts attesting to the illicit spread and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons; secondly, monitoring the strict compliance of Member States with international obligations regarding Security Council sanctions; thirdly, providing assistance to States in matters of the disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants and their subsequent rehabilitation and reintegration into civilian society, including the dispatch of advisory missions to States at their request; fourthly, reporting on and summarizing, with a view to establishing best practices, the experiences by States in undertaking national and regional programmes and initiatives to monitor the transfer of small arms and light weapons and ammunition, including measures to combat the illicit trade in such weapons.

In conclusion, I should like to point out that, in the opinion of the Republic of Belarus, the Programme of Action — adopted as a result of a compromise — is a balanced document containing realistic proposals that, if implemented by the international community in the context of the United Nations, will help to resolve the acute problems related to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Sierra Leone. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

**Mr. Kamara** (Sierra Leone): Permit me to express Sierra Leone's delight at seeing you, Sir, chair such an important meeting of the Council at the inception of Colombia's presidency for the month of August. My delegation wishes to express its gratitude and appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Wang Yingfan, for a job well done during the month of July. May I also take this opportunity to proffer congratulatory sentiments through you to Ambassador Camilo Reyes Rodriguez for the exemplary manner in which he conducted the affairs of the recently concluded United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Sierra Leone attaches great importance to the outcome and future effective implementation of the provisions of the Programme of Action emanating from that timely Conference, which emphatically highlighted the concerns of my Government, which is only now coming to grips with the scope and magnitude of the former rebel insurgency. It is apparently all too evident that the proliferation and illegitimate utilization of small arms, which caused major devastation and carnage in Sierra Leone for over a decade, indeed lends credence to their being termed the real weapons of mass destruction. It has been noted that, within the West African subregion, there are an estimated 7 million deadly weapons in circulation, and the incessant raging conflicts continue to provide the perfect milieu in which the illicit trade in small arms continues to thrive.

The general debate and technical meetings of the Conference have now subsided, but the issue of follow-up has only just begun. In the words of Ambassador Reyes,

> "while it is critical that Member States take concerted action against the illicit trade in small arms as soon as possible, they must understand that the Conference and its outcome were only first steps in a process".

It has also been noted that, in the quest to prevent, combat and eradicate this illicit trade, Governments have committed themselves to considering all aspects of the small arms problem, particularly to brokering, tracing and providing financial and technical assistance. While we acknowledge the fact that considerable effort has been made at various levels in all parts of the world to deal with all aspects of the problem, we must now strengthen and build on those foundations.

It is therefore in this vein that we call upon the Security Council to harmonize the positions of Member States in accordance with the provisions adopted in the Programme of Action. The Council must critically emphasize the need for Member States to pursue radical programmes within their respective territories, subregions, regional groupings and elsewhere, aimed at building a greater consensus on the prevention, combat and virtual eradication of the illicit trade in small arms. The Council could maximize its objectives in this sphere by utilizing its many and varied peacekeeping forces in sensitive conflict areas to effectively address the issue of collection, storage, control and destruction of light weapons, also liaising with other actors within the United Nations system, such as the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to name but a few, as well as through non-governmental organizations and civil society, to implement programmes designed to put the message across.

We regard the Security Council as the forerunner in the global pursuit of the maintenance of international peace and security. The recommendations proposed in the various reports of the Secretary-General should be given much more attention and introspective consideration by the Security Council if the Council is to succeed in that pursuit, especially with regard to the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. It is simply not good enough to issue presidential statements and resolutions that have very little meaningful effect on their intended recipients. My delegation would like to see much more potent action emanating from those statements and resolutions,

which would have an appropriately direct bearing and reverberating effect on those recipients. It is the view of my delegation that the Security Council should develop the capacity to have greater leverage over those parties directly responsible for the propagation of conflicts caused by the proliferation of small arms. In short, we wish to see a Security Council that dishes out sterner, more robust and more resolute measures in order to attain its desired Charter objectives.

My delegation also wishes to note that by dispatching advisory missions to conflict areas, the Security Council has invariably grasped in greater detail the full frontal effect, as it were, of the problems involved in many situations. The Council's interaction with high-level delegations ensures complementary cooperation. Regional actors have become more attuned to the inner workings of the Council, to the extent that they look to the Council for guidance and approval with regard to their respective intended measures and aspirations, which do not necessarily run counter to the thinking of the wider international community. With that in mind, my delegation is of the view that the Council should markedly and continuously flex its muscular authority over the form and content of the provisions of the Programme of Action, and more specifically over the question of compliance with arms embargoes.

Sierra Leone calls on other delegations, especially those that are embroiled in conflict situations, to be constant advocates of stricter compliance with the norms of international law as a measure aimed at putting an end to the culture of impunity. Otherwise, the highly lucrative illicit trade in small arms will continue unabated. It is also the view of my delegation that the Council should adopt far-reaching measures to ensure that Member States and their respective authorized entities involved in the production and marketing of small arms are forced to comply with relevant legally binding instruments. It should also effectively cause the strengthening of established moratoriums and similar initiatives and programmes specifically aimed at combating and preventing this trade, which would lead to the eventual eradication of these weapons of mass destruction.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of Ghana. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

**Mr. Effah-Apenteng** (Ghana): Mr. President, Ghana too joins other speakers in commending you for your initiative to hold this Council debate so soon after the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Given the prominent role played by your country in the discussions leading to the Conference and during the Conference itself, the decision to make this a priority issue for consideration by the Council so early in Colombia's presidency is an eloquent reflection of your country's keen desire to bring about the eradication of this menace, and of its commitment to that goal. We are confident that this debate will enhance consideration of the outcome of the Conference later this year by the General Assembly, which mandated it.

Allow me also to congratulate the Secretary-General and the Department for Disarmament Affairs on their supportive role in ensuring the successful conclusion of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the adoption of a realistic Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate that phenomenon. Despite its deficiencies, the Programme of Action sets out in a comprehensive manner not only measures to be implemented at the national, regional and global levels to manage and control the illicit proliferation of small arms, but also options for dealing with problems associated with the trend. Since the Security Council is charged primarily with the maintenance of international peace and security, it should play a role that focuses on the following aspects of the Programme of Action.

The first of these is lessons learned. There is no doubt that the early integration of former combatants into mainstream civilian life is a critical element that promotes reconciliation and prevents the recurrence of conflict. My delegation feels that the Security Council can contribute to that process through the inclusion, where applicable, of relevant provisions for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) in the mandates and budgets of peacekeeping operations. Such mandates must be broad enough and sufficiently well resourced to enable missions to execute the critical DDR components of their operations. The new logic should be one that calls for emphasis on preventing a former combatant from taking up his or her gun because of a failed demobilization and reintegration effort. The Council

must be seen to be working to make that thinking a reality.

Secondly, ensuring the effective implementation of arms embargoes imposed by the Council is one sure way of curbing the supply of small arms and light weapons to conflict areas, particularly to non-State actors. We know that such embargoes have in the past been broken with impunity by arms brokers often acting with the connivance of State actors. We would like to see the Council demonstrate greater cohesion, vigilance and decisiveness in monitoring, exposing and censuring breaches of its embargoes once such conduct is exposed.

The third aspect is the strengthening of regional and subregional mechanisms. The Council's recognition of the complementary role of regional and subregional mechanisms in the maintenance of global peace and security has been evident in its many reports reviewing the progress of various peacekeeping missions. Yet the lack of resources and appropriate technology to make it possible to consolidate initiatives at those levels to encourage activities such as intelligence sharing, transparency, cross-border weapons collection programmes and the coordination of national armaments regulations has hindered the further development and consolidation of existing mechanisms, such as arms moratoriums.

The Council's support and initiative in the establishment of funds, such as the Small Arms Fund, which could support regional initiatives, as envisaged in the Programme of Action, would go a long way towards helping strengthen those mechanisms at the regional and subregional levels.

The fourth aspect relates to follow-up mechanisms. The Programme of Action highlights the promotion of conflict prevention mechanisms as one measure for curbing the need or demand for small arms and light weapons. The Council's involvement, through the use of its good offices to encourage affected States to solicit assistance from other States and from regional and international organizations in the pursuit of negotiated solutions to conflicts, would be pivotal in helping to avert conflict.

The delegations of Member States, particularly those from Africa, demonstrated the necessary political will and flexibility that ensured a successful outcome of the Conference two weeks ago.

Following the Conference, the Council can facilitate the process for the development of an international instrument on small arms by also exhibiting the necessary cooperative support in promoting initiatives such as workshops in various regions and subregions on the small arms issue that would serve as a platform on which to launch the process. The Council, acting in this way, can justify its efforts to participate and contribute in this area.

**The President** *(spoke in Spanish)*: I thank the representative of Ghana for his kind words addressed to my delegation.

The next speaker is the representative of Bulgaria. I invite him to take a seat at the table and to make his statement.

**Mr. Sotirov** (Bulgaria): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, on Colombia's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. On behalf of the Bulgarian delegation, I wish you every success in fulfilling your demanding and challenging tasks in presiding over this important body.

Let me join previous speakers in congratulating Ambassador Alfonso Valdivieso and his colleagues on the excellent preparations for this open debate. We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the consideration of the issue of small arms — an item on the Security Council's agenda since September 1999 that is of particular concern to the international community.

The importance of this meeting is emphasized by the fact that it is being convened only a few days after the successful completion of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, chaired in a professional and devoted way by Ambassador Camilo Reyes of Colombia.

Bulgaria has associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Belgium, on behalf of the European Union, and we fully share the view that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects should be assessed as a landmark in, and an impetus to, the efforts of the United Nations to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in strategic arms and light weapons. We are pleased to see that the positive

outcome of the Conference is already galvanizing the political will to fight the problem at national, regional and global levels.

Bulgaria is pursuing a responsible policy of stringent control over arms exports in compliance with existing regional and international standards. I would like to share some of our national experience.

Bulgaria has aligned itself with the criteria and principles contained in the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports and the European Union Joint Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons of December 1998.

On 2 February 2001, the Bulgarian Government adopted a special normative act for the implementation of the principles, standards and criteria contained in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe document on small arms and light weapons.

Our country abides by the provisions of the moratorium on small arms transfers established by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). We welcome the recent decision in Lusaka by the ECOWAS heads of State and Government to renew the moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of light weapons for a second three-year period, with effect from 5 July 2001.

In the context of the foregoing, Bulgaria has introduced and developed a robust system of export controls for foreign trade activities in arms and dual-use goods and technologies, corresponding to the highest existing international standards.

The Bulgarian Government has established the regular practice of adopting special normative acts or decrees stemming from a given international commitment.

During the last two years, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria adopted a series of internal regulations related to the implementation of Security Council sanctions. These acts translate the provisions of Security Council resolutions into Bulgaria's domestic legislation and enforce them with respect to Bulgarian nationals and legal entities. Currently, a governmental decree for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1343 (2001), on the imposition of sanctions against Liberia, is in the process of preparation for adoption by the Bulgarian Government.

In accordance with our international commitments and the restructuring programme of the Bulgarian armed forces, the Ministry of Defence has already started projects for the destruction of surplus small arms and light weapons. We are in close cooperation with a number of partners, such as the United States of America, Canada, the United Kingdom, Norway, the Netherlands and others, on a whole range of issues regarding stockpile management and destruction of small arms and light weapons. Under the terms of an agreement for cooperation between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence of the Republic of Bulgaria and the State Department of the United States of America, signed on the last day of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, a surplus in small arms, nearly 80,000 units, will be destroyed using existing facilities in Bulgaria.

In addition to taking steps at the national level, Bulgaria actively promotes regional cooperation in South-Eastern Europe. I would like to refer to the importance of the documents adopted at the Regional Conference on Export Controls, held in Sofia in December 1999. The measures agreed at that Conference enhance national export control systems, in line with the European standards, strengthen the process of regional cooperation in preventing illicit arms-trafficking and controlling exports of arms and dual-use goods and technologies, and constitute a sound contribution to regional stability in South-Eastern Europe.

We commend the valuable practical work of the Security Council's arms embargo monitoring mechanisms. We are convinced that full and strict implementation of Security Council sanctions can be achieved only through goodwill and a synergy of actions on the part of all relevant actors. Improved international cooperation and the coordination of national State policies are indispensable for the attainment of this goal.

Bulgaria will continue its cooperation with the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies on monitoring the sanctions, including arms embargoes, and will render all necessary assistance for the implementation of Security Council measures undertaken under Chapter VII of the Charter.

Before concluding, let me assure the Council that Bulgaria is fully committed to further contributing to

the efforts of the international community to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms, which has a destabilizing effect and poses a threat to international peace and security.

**The President** *(spoke in Spanish)*: I thank the representative of Bulgaria for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Nigeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

**Mr. Mbanefo** (Nigeria): My delegation is delighted to see Colombia serving as the President of the Security Council for the month of August. I am also happy to see the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia chairing the meeting today.

It is gratifying to see the Council holding this open debate on the question of small arms shortly after the successful conclusion of the United Nations the Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York last month. We wish to commend Ambassador Reyes of Colombia on his well-deserved election as President of this United Nations Conference devoted to finding solutions to the pressing problems of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

This meeting could not have taken place at a more opportune moment. The fact that it is on the agenda of the Security Council, we believe, is an affirmation of the desire of the international community to deal with the problem of the growing illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

While it is acknowledged that these weapons, in and of themselves, do not start or lead to conflicts, their ready availability has, nonetheless, frequently caused the escalation of these conflicts and aided the perpetration of criminal activities in many countries. Clearly their proliferation and the illicit trade in them — which is estimated to amount to 40 to 50 per cent of the global trade in small arms — pose real threats to the economic and social development of many developing countries, especially in Africa.

Without doubt Africa is the most affected region if one considers the devastation that conflicts involving small arms have wreaked on communities and States. We would recall the gory details of the Rwanda pogrom and the untold hardships visited upon the innocent civilians in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Liberia, just to mention a few. The Secretary-General has highlighted the nexus between illicit trade in arms, the illegal smuggling of natural resources such as diamonds, timber and so forth, and the perpetration of conflicts in Angola, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The impact of the devastation caused by small arms and light weapons in Africa cannot be underestimated. In many instances, economies have been totally destroyed and reduced to shambles, infrastructures laid waste and millions of people killed and wounded while thousands have been internally displaced and many more turned into refugees. In the face of this development, responsible members of the international community cannot stand by and allow it to continue.

Even though African States lack the capacity to manufacture small arms and light weapons, the continent unfortunately is the recipient of large quantities of these weapons. It is estimated that in Africa alone there are some 7 million illicit arms and light weapons in circulation. The incessant conflicts and wars in the continent have provided an environment in which trade in light arms is carried out in exchange for the natural resources of the continent. The lucrative barter of arms for natural resources such as "blood diamonds" has provided an opportunity for arms dealers to thrive in the continent. It has also helped rebel leaders to sustain conflicts.

In recognition of the enormous suffering that Africa has experienced as a result of conflicts induced by small arms, leaders of the West African countries have tried, for example, to tackle the problems of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons at the subregional level. In October 1998 the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted a moratorium on the importation and exportation of light weapons in ECOWAS States. African Ministers also adopted in Bamako on 30 November 2000 a declaration on a common African position on small arms and light weapons.

At the national level, my country, Nigeria, has put in place practical measures to tackle the problem through the establishment of the National Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Also Nigeria declared Thursday, 5 July 2001 "small arms destruction day" in conformity with the decision reached at the preparatory committee to declare the first day of the

United Nations Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons as such.

Nigeria and Africa have taken these initiatives to underscore their awareness of the danger posed by small arms and light weapons. It is our hope that members of the international community and indeed members of the Security Council will take decisions to complement these efforts.

In view of the global nature of the problem and the urgent need to deal with it, my delegation would like to say to the members of the Council that the time has now come for us to take far-reaching decisions to complement the decisions already reached at the recent Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. To this end, Nigeria would like to urge members of the international community to render technical and financial assistance where needed to regional and national efforts to eradicate illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Nigeria also wishes to support the call for the creation of a small arms fund to assist States. Furthermore, we urge Member States to share information on a voluntary basis on their national marking systems for small arms and light weapons.

As a follow-up to the Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons we wish to call for a review conference to take place not later than 2006 to review the progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action. My delegation also supports the recommendation in the outcome document that further study be undertaken, within existing resources, for examining the feasibility of developing an international instrument to enable States identify and trace in a timely and reliable manner illicit small arms and light weapons.

In conclusion, we would like to commend the Secretary-General for his report contained in document S/2000/1092, in which he provided a reference manual for safe methods of weapons destruction for use in missions areas. We hope that members of the various United Nations peacekeeping missions will find this useful during the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes.

Surely a world free of arms would be a peaceful world, but since this for now is a utopian vision, we can only strive to limit the proliferation of illicit small arms and to ensure that they do not find their way into the wrong hands. Our concerted efforts to address the issues of conflict prevention, peace-building and the protection of civilians and children in armed conflicts will depend on how effectively we are able to tackle the issue of the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Nigeria for his kind words addressed to me.

The next and final speaker is the representative of Thailand. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

**Mr. Singhara Na Ayudhaya** (Thailand) (*spoke in Spanish*): Though I am the last speaker, I nonetheless wish to tell you how very pleased I am, Mr. President, to participate, and I would also like to welcome you, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, to New York. By dedicating your very valuable time to deal with this issue demonstrates that the Government of Colombia attaches great importance to the question of small arms.

(*spoke in English*)

I should like to commend you, Mr. President, for taking the timely initiative of organizing this open debate in the Security Council on the important issue of small arms. It was only last month that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was concluded under the able chairmanship of Colombia, resulting in the Programme of Action. This initiative drew the attention of the international community to the multifaceted problems associated with small arms and light weapons and to the common threat that the illicit trade in such weapons poses to mankind. I should also like to thank Colombia for preparing the document entitled "Issues for the open debate on the question of small arms" (S/2001/732, annex), which serves as a good basis for our discussion today.

The landmark United Nations Conference and the resulting Programme of Action marked an important first step in our common effort to combat the scourge of the illicit trade in small arms. Although we have a framework document that is realistic, achievable, and comprehensive, there is a general view that the Programme of Action has not fully met the expectations of the international community, particularly the expectations of the victims of the illicit trade in small arms. Nevertheless, it is important to

recognize that we are at the beginning, rather than at the end, of a long-term process of mobilizing the international community to tackle this problem. My delegation therefore pledges its support for the follow-up work of the Conference and for ensuring effective implementation of the Programme of Action.

As expressed in the statement by the President of the Security Council of 24 September 1999, there is a link between the destabilizing accumulation of small arms on the one hand, and threats to international and regional peace and stability on the other. The illicit trade in small arms is also an important factor because it enables such destabilizing accumulations to take place more quickly. But what makes the problem of small arms an even greater threat to international and national peace and stability is its linkage with other problems of national and international concern, such as drug-trafficking, money-laundering and cross-border terrorism, to name a few. It is when small arms are in the hands of these groups of people that the threats to international and regional peace and stability are increased manifold. Thus, if one is to effectively address the small arms issues, one will also have to bear in mind these other associated problems and undertake efforts to resolve them, including, when necessary, by taking action within the Security Council.

The problem of small arms not only threatens human security but also impedes sustainable economic development, and with it the development of basic social and public services for individuals. Easy access to small arms and their use by non-State actors, including drug-traffickers, make it very difficult for individuals to lead a normal life, since the propensity to armed violence is increased. The problem of small arms thus has a strong negative impact on both freedom from want and freedom from fear, pillars of human security, and therefore needs to be addressed in all relevant forums. Let us not forget that the root cause of the problem of small arms is conflict itself, and the demand for small arms arises from conflict. We therefore urge the United Nations to continue its good work towards conflict prevention and resolving conflicts at their roots. In this connection, we are pleased that the General Assembly has just adopted a resolution to continue considering the report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of conflict and the recommendations contained therein. In addition, we urge that differences and disputes be settled through political dialogues, negotiations and other peaceful means. This is an area where the Security Council has an important role to play.

There is no doubt that the Security Council, with its mandate of ensuring international peace and security, has an important contribution to make in addressing the problem of small arms, particularly in countries or regions experiencing armed conflict. The effective design and implementation of arms embargoes, especially in conflict areas, is one area where the Security Council can and does play a pivotal role. But the Security Council should not replace other, more relevant forums at the national and international levels that have already undertaken many initiatives in addressing various issues related to the problem of small arms, issues such as the definition of small arms. The development of norms and measures to tackle the problem of small arms, including the illicit-trafficking of small arms, are best addressed in forums where there is greater universality of membership. This is to ensure transparency and to give our States the opportunity to contribute to the process. We look forward to continued, close cooperation between the Security Council and other relevant forums, including the General Assembly and regional organizations, to jointly address and find effective and practical solutions to the problem of small arms, including the implementation of the Programme of Action of the recent Conference.

**The President** *(spoke in Spanish)*: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

On the basis of today's open debate, the presidency will prepare a draft presidential statement reflecting the views expressed and will submit it for the consideration of the members of the Council during the course of the next week.

I would like to express my thanks to all of the speakers who have participated in this debate, and I particularly thank them for the interest shown in this item, which I am sure we all share. I believe it has been a very enriching debate that will enable the Security Council to move forward in its work with a more comprehensive vision of the subject. Again, let me thank all participating delegations. They have shown that the results of our Conference have been positive and constitute the first step in the right direction.

*The meeting rose at 7.05 p.m.*

United Nations S/PV.4355 (Resumption 1)/Corr.1

# Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

*Provisional*

**4355**th meeting

Thursday, 2 August 2001, 3 p.m.

New York

## Corrigendum

**Page 7, second column, second full paragraph**

The paragraph *should read*:

> We are also convinced that two of the major objectives of the Council in the areas of small arms — preventing conflicts and strictly implementing arms embargoes — would have been strengthened had the Conference been able to adopt a political undertaking to provide small arms and light weapons only to governments or entities duly authorized by them.

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